



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure

| Version | Date | Action |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Version 1 | September 2018 | Review |
| Version 2 | September 2022 | Amended Policy |
| Version 3 | August 2024 | Review |
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Introduction

Neath Port Talbot Council recognises that achievement of its priorities and the delivery of its wellbeing objectives are dependent on the recruitment and the retention of a skilled and committed workforce. This policy and procedure sets out the Council's approach to this.

Policy Statement

All recruitment and selection activities must be carried out in a fair, consistent, effective and professional manner. A robust recruitment process contributes directly to the continuing success of the organisation.

Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age or trade union membership, unless lawfully allowed for certain specific posts.

All appointments must be made in accordance with this policy statement.

Financial approval for the establishment of a new post must be obtained before the recruitment process commences and the [Establishment Changes as a Result of a Service Change Proposal](#) must be completed. Where relevant, all new posts must be job evaluated prior to advertising.

New Jobs and New Vacancies

The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post, whether the duties in the Job Description are still relevant, could be shared with other members of the Team and whether the responsibilities have changed or whether someone could be moved from another Team to carry out the duties.

For new posts and in the case of where the duties of a post have changed significantly, the Manager must contact the HR Team for the post to be evaluated / re-evaluated.

Prior Consideration and the Recruitment Process

Employees who have prior consideration status are entitled to be considered for vacant posts, where they will be interviewed before any other applicant, should they meet the essential criteria. The emphasis of prior consideration is for managers firstly, to consider appointing a suitable 'prior consideration' candidate who, within a 'reasonable' period of time and training being given, would be able to carry out the job competently. Prior consideration employees indicate via the tick box on the first page of the application form that they are a prior consideration applicant and specify whether they are Tier One or Tier Two.

It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to check whether the applicant is prior consideration and this can be confirmed by contacting the relevant HR Officer.

Employees who are successful in obtaining suitable alternative employment via the prior consideration process will be entitled to a statutory 4 week job trial.

The 'prior consideration' process has been designed to be flexible to support the employee in successfully seeking suitable and alternative employment. You can view the Redeployment Procedure as part of the [Council's Management of Change in Partnership Policy](#) (pages 16 – 21)

Job Description and Person Specification

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps. Please refer to our [recruitment resources](#) section of the HR intranet pages, which includes the corporate template for our job description and person specification.

The person specification is of crucial importance and it forms the basis of the selection decision. The person specification details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. It should be drawn up after the job description and both documents should inform the content of the advert. The person specification should be specific, related to the job, and not unnecessarily restrictive - for example only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified. The person specification enables potential applicants to make an informed decision about whether to apply and those who do apply, to give sufficient relevant detail of their skills and experience in their application.

If Welsh language skills are essential or desirable for the job role, this should be included in the person specification. Please see guidance on how to assess the Welsh language skills required for the role [here](#).

If the role is eligible for a DBS check, this should be included as an 'essential' criteria in the person specification.

Preparing to Advertise

Prior to advertising, the Manager will be required to complete a requisition form on iTrent using the recruiting manager role.

The recruiting manager will also need to attach the advertisement template, job description and person specification to the requisition form.

Please refer to our [iTrent recruiting manager guide](#) for further information on how to create a new requisition.

Advertising a Vacancy

All job vacancies can be advertised both internally and externally simultaneously.

Recruiting managers must follow the prior consideration process as stated above.

For hard to fill posts, guidance on the most relevant media can be provided by the HR Talent Management Team (email talent@npt.gov.uk)

Recruiting managers are also expected to ensure that the following are arranged before the vacancy is advertised and that this information is included in the advertisement:

- Closing Date
- Interview Date

Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011)

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, the Council is required to provide certain documentation in both the Welsh language and English language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language. This includes certain Recruitment and Selection documentation.

When the manager is advertising a vacant post, they must firstly, assess the need for Welsh language skills for the post and categorise as one of the following:

- Welsh language skills for the vacant post are:
- Essential
- Desirable
- Need to be learnt

These categories are included on the requisition form.

If Welsh language skills have either been categorised as essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the manager must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh.

The recruiting manager must publish the Advert, Job Description, Person Specification plus any other supporting recruitment materials in Welsh and must advertise bilingually at the same time. It is the manager's responsibility to arrange translation of documentation via the [Welsh Translation Unit](#).

If the applicant wishes to use the Welsh language in interview or for an assessment, the manager must conduct the interview or assessment in Welsh or alternatively, arrange a simultaneous translation service. All communication must then be in Welsh.

The application form includes a question which asks the applicant whether they wish to conduct the interview/assessment using the Welsh language.

Managers must not treat applications received in Welsh any less favourably than those applications received in English.

Processing Applications

Recruiting managers must be aware that when dealing with enquiries about vacancies, it is unlawful to state or imply that applications from one gender or from a particular racial group, age group, sexual orientation or religion/belief would be preferred, (unless a Genuine Occupational Qualification or Requirement applies) and to do so may lead to a complaint of unlawful discrimination.

Care must also be taken that all applicants are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to visit the team, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information. However, it is acceptable to respond to requests from individual candidates who demonstrate initiative in their preparation.

The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process.

Types of Application Forms

Anonymised application forms are the default forms that managers should use because of the benefits to equality and inclusion and the mitigation of unconscious bias.

However, for some senior posts, hard to fill posts and some specialist posts then the Council's Standard Application form may be utilised or the CV Submission Application Form.

Managers are encouraged to select the most appropriate application form based on the nature of the role, organisational requirements, and recruitment objectives. Regardless of the chosen format, adherence to fair and transparent recruitment practices remains paramount throughout the selection process.

Selecting the Panel

All shortlisting and interviews must be conducted by a panel. The Manager will select interview panel members prior to the closing date. This allows panel members to carry out the shortlisting process.

Panels must:

- have attended the Corporate Recruitment and Selection Training Course (which includes a section on equality)

- consist of a minimum of two people including the immediate line manager of the vacant post.
- reflect a sex and ethnicity balance wherever possible
- declare if they already know a candidate
- be able to participate in shortlisting and interviews for the duration of the recruitment process

Shortlisting

After the closing date has passed the interview panel should individually assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. This should be done as soon as possible after the closing date as any delays could result in losing potential successful applicants to competitors.

The panel should then meet to discuss and agree the shortlist. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the person specification. The shortlisting guidance note is available on the Recruitment Resources pages of NPT Connect and can be accessed [here](#).

Recruiting managers should note that applicants who consider themselves to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 are entitled to a guaranteed interview if they meet the essential criteria for the post. The guaranteed interview scheme also applies to any armed forces veterans. The application form includes a question so applicants can indicate whether they wish to claim a guaranteed interview.

Any written note of reasons for shortlisting or rejection, must be retained for 6 months from the date that an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint. Any photocopies of application forms made by the recruiting manager must be confidentially destroyed.

Unsuccessful candidates are invited to request feedback through the Employment Support Team (jobs@npt.gov.uk) or direct from the recruiting manager.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

Neath Port Talbot Council operates two guaranteed interview schemes, which support individuals who meet all the essential criteria to be guaranteed an interview for a vacancy. The Disability Confident Employer scheme supports applicants with a disability, and the Veterans Guaranteed Interview scheme supports those defined as Veterans.

Disability Confident Employer

Neath Port Talbot Council is a Disability Confident employer, which means we are committed to interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet all of the essential criteria of the role applied for. Applicants who have selected they wish to be considered under this scheme and who have met all the essential criteria, must be invited for interview. The recruiting manager must check the relevant section on the application for this indication and for information relating to any reasonable adjustments, and highlight this on the Shortlisting Matrix. Should the applicant have requirements, HR will inform the recruiting manager and it will be the manager's responsibility to action and implement.

Armed Forces Veterans Guaranteed Interview

The Armed Forces Veterans Guaranteed Interview scheme supports our Armed Forces Community Covenant, and means we are committed to interviewing all applicants who are former Armed Forces personnel who have previously served for at least one day. The Government defines Veterans as “anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations” and therefore Neath Port Talbot Council uses the same definition. Under this scheme, applicants who have selected they wish to be considered under this scheme and who have met all the essential criteria, must be invited for interview. The recruiting manager must check the relevant section on the application for this indication and highlight this on the Shortlisting Matrix.

Criminal Conviction Declaration

If the applicant has declared that they have a conviction or caution on their application form, the recruiting panel can only request further information that they are legally entitled to know about. If a standard or enhanced DBS check has been legally requested for the job role, the panel can only ask about criminal convictions or cautions that are not protected i.e. should be disclosed.

If the panel takes into account any conviction or caution that should not have been disclosed, they are acting unlawfully under the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act](#). Further guidance on this can be found in the Rehabilitation of Offenders policy attached as Appendix Five.

The panel should consider how any convictions or cautions disclosed are relevant to the job, if at all.

Further guidance can be found [here](#).

Arranging Interviews

Effective and timely interview scheduling is crucial to ensure that we secure the best talent. Managers must promptly arrange interviews with candidates, as any delays could result in losing potential successful applicants to competitors.

Interviewing

The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all of the elements of the person specification. The question areas to be explored by each panel member should be agreed in advance to avoid overlap or repetition.

The same areas of questioning should be covered with all candidates. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate and should be designed to seek evidence of how the interviewee meets the criteria on the person specification. Supplementary questions should be used for clarification purposes only. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g., questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job).

Interview panels act for the organisation in making selection decisions and are accountable for them. Interview notes must be taken to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint. Obviously any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.

Additional Testing as part of the Recruitment Process

Managers are encouraged to incorporate additional testing, such as presentations or database assessments, during the interview stage where appropriate e.g., for professional roles. A presentation test, for instance, allows us to assess an individual's communication skills, technical proficiency, and ability to convey complex ideas effectively. Database testing could provide insights into a candidate's hands-on experience and understanding of data structures.

Should managers wish to include any additional testing within their recruitment process, they must specify what tests they wish to carry out within the invitation to interview. This will allow candidates to prepare adequately for any supplementary assessments.

Making a Decision after Interview

The information obtained in the application, the interview, and in any selection tests will allow candidates to be assessed against the person specification and a selection decision to be made. The Chair of the panel must ensure that a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others is made and placed on the recruitment file, together with the notes of all panel members, for a minimum of 6 months after the appointment decision has been notified to the candidates.

It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to notify the successful candidate first and then to notify the unsuccessful candidates.

The recruiting manager will make a conditional offer to the successful candidate subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks being received.

We are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in our workforce. In alignment with positive action principles, when faced with equally qualified candidates, preference may be given to individuals from underrepresented groups as defined by the Equality Act. This approach aims to address historical disparities and promote a more equitable representation within our Council.

Disabled Candidates

As a Disability Confident employer, Reasonable Adjustments must be seriously considered to accommodate the needs of a successful applicant who has a disability. Guidance can be provided by the Occupational Health Unit if required.

Where the adjustments can be made, the recruiting manager should discuss with the candidate if they wish to complete a [Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport](#) in order

that all adjustments can be documented and regularly reviewed as necessary. You can access more information on the Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport [here](#).

Feedback

It is good practice to offer applicants feedback after interviews and it is our policy to respond if requested. Feedback should be specific and honest. Panel members giving feedback must ensure that any feedback they give relates to the selection criteria for the post only and is relation to the questions asked.

Pre-Employment Checks

A number of pre-employment checks will be undertaken before a formal offer of employment can be made. Any offer of employment made must always be 'conditional' and subject to satisfactory receipt of the relevant pre-employment checks as shown below. Further information on these checks is available in the [Safe Recruitment Policy](#) on the HR Intranet.

Pre-employment checks are undertaken by the HR Employment Support Team. However, it should be noted that it is the responsibility of the Recruiting Manager to ensure that all required pre-employment checks have been completed and are satisfactory before a new employee commences in their new job role.

Agency Workers

Whilst Neath Port Talbot Council aims to attract and retain a dedicated workforce, there will be occasions when there is a need to employ agency workers. The Council recognises that the use of temporary short-term workers can enable the smooth delivery of services, by providing an element of flexibility within the workforce. All services must procure agency workers via Matrix. Only in exceptional cases will alternate providers be considered, and managers must ensure they are able to provide the justification as to why they are using a different Agency. Please contact the Employment Support Team (jobs@npt.gov.uk) for further information and refer to our [Recruiting Agency Workers](#) guidance for further details.

Appointment

The HR Employment Support Team issue letters of appointment and commence the new starter on the payroll once the Manager has signed the Recruitment Manager's Checklist and confirmed a start date with the employee. It is important that recruiting managers complete this checklist to ensure that they are satisfied that all checks have been received satisfactorily and that there is no delay in the new starting receiving their salary.

Induction

Recruiting managers should ensure that they arrange an induction programme for the new starter which could include an introduction to the workplace, work colleagues and working procedures, as well as general information about the council and any key policies.

A Corporate induction checklist is available on the intranet. In addition to this face to face Corporate Inductions are also available to new employees and are delivered on a quarterly basis. Managers are encouraged to ensure that any new employees attend one of these sessions within the first three months of employment. For further information contact the Training department (trainingadmin@npt.gov.uk) .

Probation

The purpose of the Probationary Scheme is to determine whether the employee is suitable for the new job role in terms of conduct, work performance and attendance. It is important that when a new starter is subject to the Probationary Period that the reviews are carried out in a timely manner.

The [Probationary Scheme](#) is available to view on the HR Intranet.

Record Keeping

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, all records relating to the recruitment and selection procedure will be retained only for as long as is necessary (6 months), and will be securely destroyed thereafter.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Welsh Language Standards
- Management of Change in Partnership
- Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Hybrid Working Framework

Modern Slavery Statement

This statement sets out Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking within this Council.

The organisation recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking.

The Council is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities, and to ensuring that its methods of engagement are free from slavery and human trafficking.

Our Commitment and Responsibility

The Council understands that modern slavery is a significant human rights issue and includes human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, child labour, domestic servitude,

and sex trafficking. We are committed to protecting and respecting human rights and have a zero tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking. The Council will act ethically in all our relationships, and use all reasonable endeavours to take action directly and to influence others to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place, wherever we can do so.

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of the Council. Our policies have been developed with a robust approach to irradiate the slavery or human trafficking.

Relevant Policies

The Council operates the following policies that describe its approach to the identification of modern slavery risks and steps to be taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations:

- [Whistleblowing policy](#) encourages all its workers and contractors to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The organisation's whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for workers to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation.
- [Employee code of conduct](#) sets out the expected behaviour and demeanour of employees. The Council strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct in its day to day activities.
- Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out the requirements of pre-employment checks when recruiting. This includes identification documents of the candidate and right to work in the UK documentation.
- Protocol for [ordering an agency worker](#) via Matrix all agency work should be arranged, where possible, via supply management company Matrix.

Appendix A – Locations of Interviews

Guide to Neath Civic Centre

Guide to Port Talbot Civic Centre

Guide to The Quays