

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY



Knowledge Base
Last Revised October 2013
Current version January 2015
Next Review Scheduled January 2017

Contents

<u>1.0 Introduction</u>	3
<u>2.0 Policy</u>	4
<u>2.1 Policy Statement</u>	4
<u>2.2 Scope</u>	4
<u>2.3 Code of Practice and Operating Arrangements</u>	4
<u>2.4 Responsibilities</u>	4
<u>2.5 Communication and Training</u>	5
<u>2.6 Monitoring</u>	5
<u>2.7 Breaches of Policy and Procedure</u>	5
<u>3.0 Procedures</u>	6
<u>3.1 Stage 1: Planning and Advertising</u>	7
<u>3.1.1 The Vacancy</u>	7
<u>3.1.2 Job Description and Selection Criteria</u>	7
<u>3.1.3 Authority to Recruit</u>	9
<u>3.1.4 Advertising</u>	9
<u>3.1.5 Job Pack and Application process</u>	9
<u>3.1.6 Eligibility to Apply</u>	9
<u>3.1.7 Managing the Response</u>	10
<u>3.2 Stage 2: Selection</u>	10
<u>3.2.1 Recruiting Panel</u>	10
<u>3.2.2 Shortlisting</u>	11
<u>3.2.3 Selection Tests</u>	13
<u>3.2.4 Interview Preparation</u>	14
<u>3.2.5 The Interview</u>	15
<u>3.2.6 Decision Making</u>	17
<u>3.3 Stage 3: Appointment</u>	18
<u>3.3.1 Provisional Job Offer</u>	18
<u>3.3.2 References</u>	19
<u>3.3.3 Pre-employment checks, Medical, DBS and Eligibility to Work Checks</u>	20
<u>3.3.4 Occupational Health Assessment</u>	20
<u>3.3.5 Final Job Offer</u>	21
<u>3.3.6 Unsuccessful Candidates</u>	21
<u>3.3.7 Appeals</u>	21
<u>4.0 Secondments</u>	23
<u>4.1 Definition</u>	23
<u>4.2 Secondment Procedures</u>	23
<u>5.0 Managing Organisational Change</u>	23
<u>6.0 Appendices</u>	24
<u>Appendix A: Protected Characteristics</u>	29
<u>Appendix B: Useful Guidance on Occupational Requirements</u>	26
<u>Appendix C: Useful Guidance on Positive Action</u>	27
<u>Appendix D: Useful Guidance on Interview Panel</u>	28
<u>Appendix E: Useful Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments</u>	29
<u>Appendix F: Useful Guidance on Selection Tests</u>	31
<u>Appendix G: Useful Guidance on Interview Questions</u>	34
<u>Appendix H: Useful Guidance on Interviews</u>	37
<u>Appendix I: Useful Guidance on Induction</u>	40
<u>Appendix J: Useful Guidance on Giving Feedback</u>	41

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure (hereafter referred to as the Document) is to:
- set out a consistent approach to assist those involved in recruitment and selection
 - provide professional guidance and best practice for recruiting and selecting council employees
 - ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair and no bias is shown at any stage of the procedure meeting the various provisions of equal opportunity and employment legislation
 - promote a positive image of the council.
- 1.2 The document builds on current good practices within the council and strengthens the work that the council is doing in promoting equality of opportunity. It includes measures that impact on recruitment and selection such as the Two Ticks (Disability) Symbol and Access to Work Scheme.
- 1.3 The document comprises of the following sections:
- Section 1 – Introduction
 - Section 2– Sets out the council’s policy statement on recruitment and selection
 - Section 3 – Specifies the key stages of recruitment and selection
 - Section 4 – Procedures for Secondments
 - Section 5 – Staff affected by management of change procedures
 - Section 6 – Appendices
- 1.4 The document should be applied in conjunction with the following policies and processes
- Criminal Convictions and Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks Policy
 - Job Evaluation Procedure
 - Re-deployment Policy
 - Equal Opportunities Policy
 - Grievance Procedure
 - Managing Organisational Change
 - Values and Behaviours

2.0 POLICY

2.1 Policy Statement

2.1.1 Hammersmith and Fulham Council (hereafter referred to as 'the council') is committed to a fair and effective recruitment and selection process that efficiently and effectively attracts and acquires high calibre staff required to fulfil the council's objectives.

2.1.2 The council's recruitment and selection policy and procedure aims to:

- advise those involved with the recruitment and selection process on the way that the council's jobs should be filled;
- ensure that recruitment and selection methods and practices are fair, efficient, thorough and consistently applied across the council;
- adhere to the principles of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- ensure all appointments are made on merit and no prospective or existing employee receives less favourable treatment because of a [protected characteristic](#) (Appendix A); and
- all recruitment is made in accordance with the Two Ticks Disability Symbol Standards – to include an offer of interview to all candidates declaring a disability who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria for a post.

2.1.3 The proper and effective use of the policy and procedure would enable the council to:

- recruit the best possible candidates;
- promote a positive image of the council;
- ensure that there are reasonable levels of core staff who reflect the council's diverse community; and
- fill vacancies quickly to support day-to-day service provision.
- fulfil the Council's vision and values

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 This policy will apply to all recruitment and selection practices of the council except for the recruitment of agency workers and consultants, which are covered by separate guidelines.

2.3 Code of Practice and Operating Arrangements

2.3.1 The principles outlined in the policy statement will be pursued through a range of professional and administrative activities which are described in the Policy and appropriate user Guides.

2.4 Responsibilities

2.4.1 All staff involved in recruitment and selection have a responsibility to ensure that this document is followed at all times and inform a senior manager if they suspect that unlawful discrimination or any malpractice has occurred.

2.4.2 Chief Officers and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the document is fully implemented in their departments and those involved in the recruitment and selection in their service areas have attended the relevant recruitment and selection courses.

2.4.3 The BT SSC will provide support and professional advice at all stages of the process. Retained Human Resources arrange relevant training courses for recruiters and selectors.

2.5 Communication and Training

2.5.1 This document can be accessed via the BT SSC Knowledge Base

2.5.2 It is the council's policy that all those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff should ideally have completed a recognised recruitment and selection training course. The Panel Chair must have completed the training. In exceptional circumstances, staff that have not completed the required training may be eligible to sit on a selection panel. This decision will be made by the Chair of the panel.

2.6 Monitoring

2.6.1 Retained Human Resources will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy and procedure across the council and providing relevant information as required.

2.6.2 Retained Human Resources will seek feedback from those involved in recruitment

2.7 Breaches of Policy and Procedure

2.7.1 Failure to observe the requirements outlined in this document may result in disciplinary action.

2.7.2 Members of staff who consider that they have been dealt with unfairly are in the first instance asked to speak to the Chair of the recruiting panel. If this is not satisfactorily resolved at this stage, they may wish to pursue a complaint using the council's established grievance procedure which can be found on the council's intranet.

2.7.3 External applicants may similarly seek information from the Chair of the recruiting panel and if necessary submit a written complaint via BT SSC.

3.0 PROCEDURES

The procedure for recruitment and selection is managed through the BT Shared Services Centre (SSC) via a number of User Guides that are based on the principals established in this Policy. It can be divided in to three main Stages.

Stage 1 PLANNING AND ADVERTISING	Stage 2 SELECTION	Stage 3 APPOINTMENT
<u>The Vacancy</u>	<u>Recruiting Panel</u>	<u>Provisional Job Offer</u>
<u>Job Description and Selection Criteria</u>	<u>Shortlisting</u>	<u>References</u>
<u>Authority To Recruit</u>	<u>Selection Tests</u>	<u>Medical, DBS and Eligibility to Work Checks</u>
<u>Advertising</u>	<u>Interview Preparation</u>	<u>Occupational Health Assessment</u>
<u>Job Pack and Application Process</u>	<u>The Interview</u>	<u>Final Job Offer</u>
<u>Eligibility to Apply</u>	<u>Decision Making</u>	<u>Unsuccessful Candidates</u>
<u>Managing the Response</u>		<u>Appeals</u>

3.1 Stage 1: Planning and Advertising

3.1.1 *The Vacancy*

When a vacancy occurs, before proceeding with advertising, the relevant manager should consider alternatives to recruitment and review the position to ensure that the role remains relevant and meets current service needs.

The following should be considered:

- What is the purpose of the post?
- Is the post still essential to service delivery?
- Can the post contribute to the financial savings? (NB The Council's pay strategy April 2013 – March 2016 reduces the salary budget of all vacant posts graded PO1 to PO10 by 10%)
- What is the potential for and implications of sharing the duties amongst a number of other post-holders or allocating the responsibilities elsewhere?
- Is the post suitable to be split, performed on a reduced or part time basis or by job share?
- Have the priorities or aims of the job changed? and if so, how?
- Have the duties changed or will they be changing to accommodate new practices?
- Does the job description need to be updated?
- Does the grading of the post accurately value the level of duties and responsibilities?

Once the above has been addressed, there will be a need to consider the job description.

3.1.2 Job Description and Selection Criteria

3.1.2.1 The job description describes the main duties, accountabilities and responsibilities of the job. The selection criteria sets out the essential education, qualifications, values and behaviours, experience, knowledge, skills and aptitude and physical requirements, which are required to do the job.

The job description and selection criteria provide the basis for the preparation of:

- The Advertisement
- The Shortlist
- The Interview
- The Appointment

3.1.2.2 Clear, concise and accurate job descriptions are essential. Most established posts already have written job descriptions. Including tasks or duties that, in practice, are not performed may not only put off appropriately qualified people from applying but may result in a discrimination claim if such people believe they have unfairly been denied the opportunity to apply.

3.1.2.3 For new posts, where there is no existing job description, this must be drawn up in consultation with Retained HR.

3.1.2.4 The selection criteria describes the values and behaviours, skills, knowledge, abilities, qualifications, experience and qualities that are considered necessary or desirable in a candidate, in order to perform all the duties in the job description satisfactorily.

3.1.2.5 The selection criteria will be behaviour based, focusing on the Council's values and behaviours as they relate to the role. Each of the Council's five (seven for managerial posts) values and behaviours will form at least one of the selection criteria for the post, along with necessary professional / technical competence required to undertake the role.

3.1.2.6 Careful consideration should be given as to whether academic qualifications are desirable criteria for the role. If you consider that a degree is desirable to evidence the intellect and ability of candidates, you should also include wording to explain that you will consider applications from candidates without a degree provided they can demonstrate a particularly strong record of personal responsibility and achievement.

3.1.2.7 It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager with advice from BT SSC to consider where Occupational Requirements (OR) provisions apply to a particular vacancy.

APPENDIX B – USEFUL GUIDANCE ON OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1.2.8 If applicable, contact the BT SSC for advice. It should be noted that some cases can be difficult so early contact to seek advice is encouraged.

3.1.2.9 In some cases, the application of OR procedures will be referred to the Bi-Borough Director of Human Resources for a final decision.

3.1.3 Authority to Recruit

3.1.3.1 The Recruitment process will be guided by the BT SSC e.Recruiter and by the appropriate user Guide.

3.1.4 Advertising

3.1.4.1 The Line Manager is responsible for drafting the advertisement. Specialist advice on the wording of advertisements, media selection deadlines and cost, special presentations and Occupation Requirements can be provided by the BT SSC

3.1.4.2 Re-deployees will be given first priority to any council vacancies

3.1.4.3 All vacancies must be advertised internally for a minimum one week across Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (K&C) and Westminster City Council (WCC) before other external publications and costly media are used. All posts must be advertised in the Council's vacancy bulletin, on the council's website and Job Centre Plus.

3.1.4.4 Staff who are absent from work including those on maternity, additional paternity, long term sick leave, secondment or sabbatical are encouraged to view the Council's website on a regular basis and should be informed by their manager of any vacancies occurring in their own department.

3.1.4.5 The advertisement must:

- accurately reflect the post title, department, location, salary, responsibilities of the job, a summary of the selection criteria, person specification and include any contractual obligations
- reflect the council's commitment to equal opportunities in service delivery and employment including positive encouragement for under-represented groups where appropriate
- if Occupational Requirements procedures apply, this should be included in the advertisement, quoting the appropriate section of the Act below.

'Section 83, 1 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 applies to this post'.

This will ensure that nobody is deterred from applying or making an unsuccessful application even though they could in fact do the job.

3.1.4.6 In accordance with **Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989** all appointments to local government must be made on merit. It is however lawful under **Positive Action** measures in **the Equality Act 2010** to encourage applications from people of a particular protected characteristic where they have been under-represented at a certain level or grade under certain conditions. These are:

- enabling or encouraging persons who share the protected characteristics to overcome or minimise disadvantage (action to remedy)
- meeting those needs (action to meet needs)
- enabling or encouraging persons who share the protected characteristic to participate in that activity (action to encourage participation in activities).

[APPENDIX C:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON POSITIVE ACTION](#)

3.1.4.8 It is recommended that should departments advertise a particular vacancy and a subsequent vacancy arises with the same grade, selection criteria and job description in a job share, temporary or permanent capacity, departments can utilise the responses from the advertised post within a 3 month time period from the date of original offer.

3.1.5 Job Pack and Application process

3.1.5.1 All applications must be made online via the BT SSC E.Recruiter system. . No CV's are accepted. Candidates can access the Job Pack on the Tri-borough Recruitment Portal. The Job Pack will include at least the following information:

- I. Job description
- II. Selection criteria (including any Occupational Requirement)
- III. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement
- IV. If the post is politically restricted
- V. If the post requires an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or any other qualification

3.1.5.2 BT SSC will deal with all enquiries relating to advertising vacancies, referring to recruiting manager as necessary.

3.1.5.3 Candidates who are disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and require reasonable adjustments to apply for positions need to contact the recruitment team for advice and guidance.

3.1.6 Eligibility to Apply

3.1.6.1 All jobs that are advertised internally only will be open to all permanent and temporary workers across the 3 boroughs and will include the following statement;

‘ONLY PERMANENT, TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES OR INTERNAL AGENCY STAFF OF LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL MAY APPLY FOR THIS POST.’

3.1.7 *Managing the Response*

- 3.1.7.1 Candidate application forms will be available to the interview panel on E. Recruiter.
- 3.1.7.2 Any complaints during this process should be noted by BT SSC and forwarded to the Recruiting Manager and chair of the panel for information/action if necessary.

3.2 Stage 2: Selection

3.2.1 *Recruiting Panel*

- 3.2.1.1 The Recruiting Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel) is responsible for the selection stage of the process and the Recruiting Manager is responsible for convening a panel.
- 3.2.1.2 Ideally, the panel should consist of three people but it must comprise of at least two people and should normally include the Line Manager.
- 3.2.1.3 In accordance with good equality and diversity practices, the panel should be representative in terms of their composition, e.g. age, sex, race etc. Panel members should declare any interests, friendships and associations which could conflict with or be perceived to conflict with their responsibilities on the panel. Where there are potential conflicts, the Chair will decide if the panel member should take part.
- 3.2.1.4 Depending on the role being recruited to and the complexity of potential issues, a HR representative may be invited as an independent member to the Panel to ensure procedural guidelines are followed or to participate as a full member of the Panel.
- 3.2.1.5 Ideally, all panel members must have undertaken suitable training in or briefing on recruitment and selection and the Chair must be trained in the council's Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 3.2.1.6 Ideally, all panel members must have undertaken suitable training in the Council's equality policy.
- 3.2.1.7 Training needs to be given on an ongoing basis to ensure that panel members are reminded of their responsibilities and kept up to date. The council may wish to review the training records of those involved in a recruitment exercise and, where necessary, provide refresher training before the exercise begins.

[APPENDIX D:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON THE INTERVIEW PANEL](#)

3.2.2 Shortlisting

- 3.2.2.1 An unsuccessful candidate cannot reapply for the same post until a three month period has elapsed. This is to allow the candidate a reasonable time to action any feedback or development that may be required. (Notwithstanding paragraph 3.2.6.5)
- 3.2.2.2 Shortlisting is the means of identifying which applicants should go through to the next round of the selection process. The method involves gathering evidence from the application form and assessing it against the pre-determined selection criteria set out in the job description. This should be done in a systematic and consistent way for all applications.
- 3.2.2.3 The Recruiting Manager is responsible for arranging the shortlisting process and ensuring that candidates are scored against the agreed short listing matrix. This should normally take place within one week of the closing date. If the panel consists of more than 2 people, shortlisting need only be carried out by a minimum of 2 people and the result agreed with the other panel members.
- 3.2.2.4 Individual short-lists will be drawn up by each panel member and the final shortlist may be agreed through a meeting of the Panel. If there is no disagreement, the Chair can authorise that the shortlist be agreed without a meeting.
- 3.2.2.5 Using the selection criteria, those involved in shortlisting should identify those criteria against which evidence can be gained from the application form. The remaining criteria will be assessed either by test or at interview.-(NB In competitive assimilation selections arising from a reorganisation, candidates will be required to submit a personal statement aligned to the Council's values and behaviours. This will be assessed both at shortlisting and following interview.)
- 3.2.2.6 Applicants should be assessed using the following rating scale.

Rating	Points	Description
Excellent	8	The candidate provided, exemplary unambiguous examples and evidence of the values and behaviours and technical/professional knowledge relevant to the role and some evidence at a higher level.
Good	6-7	The candidate provided clear unambiguous examples and evidence of values and behaviours and technical/professional knowledge relevant to the role.
Fair	4-5	The candidate provided some examples and evidence of values and behaviours and technical/professional knowledge relevant to the role.
Weak	2-3	The candidate provided limited evidence of values and behaviours and technical/professional knowledge relevant to the role.
Poor	0-1	The candidate has failed to provide any evidence of values and behaviours and technical/professional knowledge relevant to the role.

- 3.2.2.7 The panel should agree before the shortlisting process and the minimum pass mark.
- 3.2.2.8 The weight given to each item in the selection criteria should not be changed during shortlisting; for example, in order to include someone who would otherwise not be shortlisted.
- 3.2.2.9 Each person should mark the applications separately, before agreeing to a final mark.
- 3.2.2.10 Selection should be based only on information provided in the application forms or in any formal performance assessment reports, the case of internal applicants. Selected candidates must have a minimum score of {4} on all questions.
- 3.2.2.11 Managers should be aware that women and disabled people are more likely to have had career pauses or little or fragmented work experience. When looking at their application, consider how alternative situations and experiences may have given them transferable skills e.g. voluntary activities, training situations and personal and leisure activities.
- 3.2.2.12 The council is accredited for the Two Ticks Disability Symbol therefore all disabled candidates, marked 'YES' on E-Recruiter should be shortlisted for interview, if the selection criteria are met, even to a minimal level. This is in line with council's Equal opportunities Policy.

- 3.2.2.13 Where a disabled candidate is shortlisted, they will be asked prior to interview what, if any, [reasonable adjustments](#) they require in order to have equality of opportunity in the selection/interview process.
- 3.2.2.14 Only candidates who meet the selection criteria should be invited to interview. Panels can normally interview between one and eight candidates per vacant post, depending on the number of applicants who best meet the selection criteria. Where a large number of applicants meet the selection criteria, a further shortlisting exercise may be introduced.
- 3.2.2.15 The panel should reach agreement on the shortlist by consensus. If there is a disagreement, the Chair will decide on advice from the BT SSC. Reasons for not shortlisting applicants must be recorded.
- 3.2.2.16 To ensure consistency the same staff should be responsible for selection decisions in any given recruitment exercise.

[APPENDIX E:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS](#)

3.2.3 Selection Tests

- 3.2.3.1 The main method of selection used by the council is the selection interview. However, appropriate additional methods of selection may be used when it can be established that the additional test or question will accurately test against one or more selection criteria. Advice from the BT SSC must be sought.
- 3.2.3.2 These additional methods can be divided into two main groups:
- Psychometric Tests
 - Work related exercises and tests

Psychometric tests should only be used with the agreement of Retained HR Business Partner and only tests that are British Psychological Society (BPS) approved should be considered. These tests will be administered by BT SSC. This method will normally be used after the shortlisting as part of the interview/final selection process and feedback on test performance will be offered to candidates.

Work related exercises and tests can be used to assess a wide variety of skills including numerical ability, accuracy in form completion, presentation skills and ability to produce written documents.

- 3.2.3.3 Information on the additional testing and which criteria it relates to should be included in the job pack.

- 3.2.3.4 Where the panel consider that a selection test would aid the selection decision, they should liaise with the BT SSC who can provide details of any suitable existing tests.
- 3.2.3.5 Where other selection methods are used in addition to the interview, managers should consider reasonable adjustments for candidates who are disabled. Managers need to contact BT SSC for further advice and guidance.
- 3.2.3.6 If a selection test is used, all shortlisted applicants must be tested and the same conditions must be applied to each candidate except where reasonable adjustments are required for disabled applicants' i.e.
- Information given about the test (e.g. providing written instructions in an accessible format)
 - Nature of the test (e.g. allowing a disabled person to take an oral test in writing or a written test orally)
 - Time allocated to complete the test (e.g. allowing a disabled person extra time to complete the test)
 - Test environment (e.g. permitting a disabled person the assistance of a reader or scribe during the test)
 - Equipment used.
- 3.2.3.7 Existing employees participating in a competitive assimilation process following a departmental reorganisation, will submit a Personal Statement at the point of application. The Personal Statement will relate to the Council's values and objectives as they apply to the role as shown in the selection criteria.
- 3.2.3.8 The Personal Statement will be scored to a maximum of 15 points as follows:-
- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Excellent | 13-15 points |
| Good | 9-12 points |
| Fair | 5-8 points |
| Weak | 0-4 points |

[APPENDIX F:](#)
[SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON SELECTION TESTS](#)

3.2.4 Interview Preparation

- 3.2.4.1 The chair of the panel is responsible for conducting the interviews and this should normally be within two weeks of shortlisting. The Recruiting Manager is responsible for organising dates, time slots for interview and the venue along with updating E-Recruiter.

APPENDIX G: SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 3.2.4.2 Particular consideration will be given to the needs of candidates with disabilities and appropriate arrangements will be made with the assistance of the BT SSC.
- 3.2.4.3 Shortlisted applicants should normally be given 5 working days written notice of the interview date. Should a candidate be unable to attend on the allotted day, panels cannot give a guarantee that the interview will be rescheduled but will make reasonable efforts to assist where religious/cultural events and caring responsibilities may prevent an applicant from attending an interview. The timing of interviews may also need to be considered for example a candidate with a medical condition which means that particular times of day are better for them or needs to pray at certain times.
- 3.2.4.4 Where a candidate has requested for reasonable adjustments during the interview process, the Recruiting Manager should consider these seriously and plan for them before the interview date.
- 3.2.4.5 The panel members must meet before the interview to draft questions to measure the candidates against the selection criteria and to explore and agree model answers. In regards to examining the answers, the panel should have regard of the need to focus on behaviours and values as well as transferable skills and not only accept evidence of immediate experience. The model answers must be recorded on the interview assessment form.
- 3.2.4.6 Selection interviews will be behaviour based, focusing on the Council's values and behaviours as they relate to the post. The Council's five (seven for managerial posts) values and behaviours along with professional / technical competence will each form at least one of the selection criteria. At least one question will relate to each of the criteria.
- 3.2.4.7 Questions should be phrased so as not to use local government or departmental jargon or cultural or other idioms which could cause difficulty in understanding or alienation.
- 3.2.4.8 Interviews are a useful tool to assess how a candidate would react positively to the needs of the community and their working colleagues therefore selection panels should test candidates understanding of equality and diversity at a level appropriate to the job as an integral part of the selection process, particularly for posts with management and supervisory responsibility.

3.2.5 *The Interview*

- 3.2.5.1 It should be remembered that every interview is a public relations opportunity for the council so panel members should ensure they represent the council in a positive light.
- 3.2.5.2 All candidates must be asked the same opening question on each criterion. Panel members may probe and seek clarification on answers in order to elicit as much information as possible to measure against the selection criteria. This may vary in each candidate's case.
- 3.2.5.3 All questions must relate to the requirements of the job from the selection criteria or person specification. Panel members must not ask questions about personal circumstance, family commitments, any protected characteristics or any health related questions including sickness absence questions unless there is an occupational requirement.
- 3.2.5.4 Care should be taken as the interview stage is when it is easiest to make judgments about a candidate based on instant, subjective and sometimes wholly irrelevant impressions. It is therefore important to avoid irrelevant questions at interview. A woman is under no obligation to declare her pregnancy in a recruitment process. If she volunteers that information it should not be taken into account in deciding her suitability for the job.
- 3.2.5.5 Panels must make brief notes on each candidate. Interview notes may be disclosable in an employment tribunal and therefore comments should be confined to the factual responses that the candidate provides.
- 3.2.5.6 Every attempt should be made to keep to the interview schedule. Where delays occur, the candidates should be informed and an apology given.
- 3.2.5.7 Candidates should be invited to ask questions to ensure every candidate leaves the interview with sufficient information about the job/department/council.
- 3.2.5.8 The panel members should ensure that each candidate knows what will happen after the interview. i.e. any further selection procedure, when and how he/she will hear the result.
- 3.2.5.9 Immediately following each interview, each panel member should make an independent assessment of the candidate against the agreed interview criteria. The assessment must relate to actual interview performance.
- 3.2.5.10 Each candidate is given a score for each criterion that is tested by interview. This should be in line with the assessment rating scale in 3.2.2.6

[APPENDIX H:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON INTERVIEWS](#)

3.2.6 Decision Making

- 3.2.6.1 After all interviews have been completed, the panel should compare their assessments for each candidate. Where variations occur within individual scores awarded by panel members to a candidate, this will be discussed and where justifiable, adjustments made (records must be maintained of the rationale of the adjustments).
- 3.2.6.2 Where other tests have been used, this should have been marked and a score awarded and should form part of the decision making.
- 3.2.6.3 The decision should only be based on the candidate's ability to meet the selection criteria as demonstrated at interview and should take into account the results of any selection tests. Under no circumstances should the panel introduce any other variables or new criteria to reach a decision.
- 3.2.6.4 Care must be taken when considering issues of fitting in to ensure that this does not introduce factors outside of the selection criteria and discriminate against candidates unfairly. The council only needs to know if the person can do the job and if they are willing to do the job. Assumptions should not be made about who will and who will not fit in with the existing workforce.
- A disabled candidate should only be assessed on his/her ability to carry out the job successfully. An applicant should not be rejected solely because s/he can only do the job if certain aids are provided.
- 3.2.6.5 Where more than one candidate is judged to be appointable, the panel should identify the most competent candidate. It is recommended that the panel also agrees a reserve list, should the first choice candidate decline the offer. A reserve candidate may be offered the post if the post becomes vacant within 3 months.
- 3.2.6.6 There may be occasions where a factor emerges at interview which although not included in the person specification, would automatically rule out a candidate such as a recently spent criminal disclosure for a job role that is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check. In these cases, advice must be sought from BT SSC and a clear note of the reason for rejection must be noted on the interview record.
- 3.2.6.7 An interview working sheet should be completed by each panel member. The Chair, on behalf of the panel will complete the Interview Assessment on E.Recruiter which is an essential part of the record of the selection decision and may be used during feedback and in a grievance. The panel members should sign the relevant documentation.
- 3.2.6.8 Selection should be based only on information provided in the interview / application forms or in any formal performance assessment reports in the case of internal applicants.

3.2.6.9 Appointed candidates must have a minimum score of {4} on all questions.

3.2.6.10 Following the decision making process, The Recruiting manager should complete the interview assessment and upload a copy against the candidates record in E-Recruiter.

3.2.6.11 The BT SSC will keep all paperwork for 6 months as it may be required for evidence in any claims of unfair discrimination.

3.2.6.12 Good practice throughout the recruitment process should help avoid complaints and litigation. By ensuring we keep evidence of this good practice, the council should be better placed to show that they took reasonably practicable steps to prevent unlawful discrimination. The recruitment panel should ensure that there is a paper trail in the event of any complaint or litigation. It should be remembered that these documents, which should reflect the decision-making process in relation to the particular applicant, will be disclosed in any tribunal proceedings and so should be written clearly and objectively. Every selection decision, from shortlisting to appointment, is equally important and records should be kept to justify each decision and the process by which it was reached. These records should also demonstrate that a selection decision was based on objective evidence of the candidate's ability to do the job satisfactorily.

3.2.6.13 The paper trail should include:

- Job description
- Selection criteria
- Any written test
- Notes on the shortlisting process
- Interview questions
- Notes of the interview
- Minutes of any interview panel discussions or decisions following the interviews
- Notes can include handwritten notes or score sheets.

3.3 Stage 3: Appointment

3.3.1 Provisional Job Offer

3.3.1.1 All provisional offers subject to satisfactory clearances will be made to the candidate verbally by the recruiting manager. It must be impressed on all staff making verbal offers of employment that a verbal offer constitutes a contract made between the authority and the individual and therefore all verbal offers must be made subject to all the necessary satisfactory clearances required. Where appropriate, a job offer to a disabled candidate can be conditional on the council's ability to make any required adjustments. The Recruiting Manager should attach the 'offer form' (confirmation of successful candidate) to the candidate's E-Recruiter record

- 3.3.1.2 Following acceptance of a verbal offer the Recruiting manager should attach the verbal offer document together with any pre-employment documentation received during the interview to the candidates record and advise BT SSC of the successful candidate by updating E-Recruiter to the status of 'Verbal Offer'.
- 3.3.1.3 It should be made clear to the candidate that the offer is provisional until such time as all necessary satisfactory clearances have been obtained and therefore the candidate should not resign from their current post until the offer is confirmed following receipt of all necessary satisfactory clearances.
- 3.3.1.4 Candidates should only be offered a post at the starting salary of the graded position. If a salary higher than the minimum of the scale is offered, the Recruiting Manager should discuss this with retained HR and submit a business rationale that will be sent to the Head of People Management for approval.
- 3.3.1.5 The candidate should be informed of the job title of the job that is being offered and any particular features of the job such as it being for a fixed-term or a part-time position.

3.3.2 References

- 3.3.2.1 At least two references must be taken up for the successful candidate and must include the current or last employer ideally the line manager and any recent long term employers of the candidate. Relatives or personal friends are not appropriate as referees but consideration should be given to allowing referees who are not employers where a candidate is a school leaver or has not worked for a considerable time.
- 3.3.2.2 External applicants must nominate at least one referee who is the current employer or most recent employer, ideally the line manager. Only one reference should be sought on internal candidates from their existing line manager.
- 3.3.2.3 BT SSC will obtain reference information using standard letters after a provisional offer has been made.
- 3.3.2.4 It is for the Recruiting Manager to judge whether references received are satisfactory to the council. It is not council policy to accept 'To whom it may Concern' references. References should be on company headed paper and if sent by email from a recognisable work email address.
- 3.3.2.5 Managers should be aware when making decisions about references to ensure they do not automatically disqualify candidates based on level of sickness absence. Where a candidate has a high sickness record, it is important that the manager verifies that the absence is not related to disability

or pregnancy and where it is, to consider reasonable adjustments. This should be done in consultation with HR.

- 3.3.2.6 When checking references, any information given on the application form which is later found to be incorrect will be explored and may result in withdrawal of an offer of employment or dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.

3.3.3 *Pre-employment checks, Medical, DBS and Eligibility to Work Checks*

- 3.3.3.1 The requirement for a DBS or BPSS check will be identified against a vacancy. Where required, the BT SSC will issue a DBS or Disclosure Scotland link to a candidate for completion of the application along with the conditional offer letter. Please refer to the appropriate User Guide for further detail regarding DBS Disclosures.
- 3.3.3.2 The council is required by law to employ only those individuals who are legally entitled to undertake work in the United Kingdom and to ensure adequate procedures are in place to meet this obligation.
- 3.3.3.3 Candidates are asked on the application form if they require a current work permit. All candidates offered a post Are required to have their eligibility to work in the UK checked.
- 3.3.3.4 If there is any cause for doubt or concern as to the truthfulness of a response given by a candidate, then advice should be sought immediately from BT SSC.
- 3.3.3.5 Where academic qualifications are essential as stipulated in the selection criteria, this should be verified at the interview and certainly before appointment by asking to see the relevant certificate or letter of confirmation from the awarding institution. If the original documents are not available, employers should see a properly certified copy.

3.3.4 *Occupational Health Assessment*

- 3.3.4.1 Candidates are required to return their occupational health assessment form directly to the Occupational Health Unit.
- 3.3.4.2 The Occupational Health Unit will make an assessment of the information provided and may require a face to face meeting with a potential employee in certain circumstances (See the procedure for occupational health assessments).
- 3.3.4.3 The decision of the Occupational Health Unit in all cases is final.
- 3.3.4.4 Confidential medical information will not be disclosed to managers without the informed consent of the applicant and only if there is a specific need. Occupational Health will advise SSC of the outcome.

3.3.5 Final Job Offer (Refer to SOP HRP – 010 Section 7)

3.3.5.1 Once all clearances have been completed and are deemed satisfactory, The BT SSC will issue a final offer which will constitute:-

- Confirmation of satisfactory clearances letter confirming start date and time
- Statement of Particulars

3.3.5.2 The Recruiting Manager will agree a start date with the appointee and advise the BT SSC.

3.3.5.3 If the successful candidate declines the offer or appointment or fails to start, the Recruiting Manager will notify the BT SSC who will confirm in writing to the candidate. The Recruiting manager may decide on the preferred course of action which may include.

- Re-advertising the vacancy
- Offering the post to the next most suitable candidate.

3.3.5.4 It is the responsibility of individual managers to facilitate the induction of employees into the organisation. An induction programme should be prepared prior to the employee commencement.

[APPENDIX I:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON INDUCTION](#)

3.3.6 Unsuccessful Candidates

3.3.6.1 Unsuccessful candidates (particularly internal staff) must be notified of the outcome of the interview on the same day as the successful candidate.

3.3.6.2 Verbal feedback is only offered to candidates (if requested) who have attended an interview. This feedback should be given by a member of the interview panel and within a week of receipt of any request.

3.3.6.2 A panel member should be identified who is willing to provide feedback to internal candidates. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that feedback to internal candidates is organised (if requested).

3.3.6.3 Feedback should be as constructive as possible – suggested areas of their work where they might want to get more experience, in relation to the selection criteria.

3.3.7 Appeals

3.3.7.1 Internal applicants are encouraged to raise any issues in the first instance through the Chair of the Panel. If they are still unhappy, they may use the council's grievance procedure.

3.3.8 Withdrawing an Offer

3.3.8.1 The council may wish to withdraw an offer of employment for a number of reasons, for example, because:

- Its business requirements have changed.
- It has unexpectedly received information about the applicant which casts doubt on the desirability of employing them.
- One of the matters on which the offer was expressed to be conditional, such as receipt of satisfactory references, has not been fulfilled.

3.3.8.2 Where an offer is, to be withdrawn, the Recruiting manager may do so following receipt of guidance from the appropriate HR Business Partner. BT SSC will notify the candidate by letter of the decision to withdraw the conditional offer.

Managers should be prepared for the disappointed applicant to allege that the council's reason for doing so was unlawful (for example, that it was an act of discrimination). Therefore, managers should document their reasons for withdrawing an offer and retain documentary evidence that supports those reasons for its decision.

[APPENDIX J:
SOME USEFUL GUIDANCE ON GIVING FEEDBACK](#)

4.0 SECONDMENTS

4.1 Definition

A secondment is the temporary transfer of an employee to another part of the council or to an external organisation for an agreed period in order to realise well-defined benefits for the employee, the council department or the external organisation.

Secondment opportunities may arise out of the need to:

- Resource short-term assignments, projects or reviews;
- Cover a vacancy pending permanent recruitment or a service review;
- Cover long-term absence; or
- Bring in new knowledge, skills or competencies
- Build bridges with other departments and encourage cross functional or cross sector working.

For managers secondments should provide an opportunity to think creatively about opportunities for getting work done in ways that will deliver an improving standard of service at a reducing cost. They should become an integral part of workforce planning.

For employees secondments should be set in the context of an individual's personal development plan.

Secondments may last from a few weeks (no less than 12 is recommended) up to a year. They may be undertaken on a part time or full time basis.

4.2 Secondment Procedures

- 4.2.1 Full details of the Bi-borough Policy and procedure for Secondments is available on the BT SSC Knowledge Base

5.0 MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

5.1 The council has a legal duty to actively seek suitable alternative positions for employees who are vulnerable to redundancy. The Recruitment Team will work closely with re-deployees to identify suitable posts. This process should be in accordance with the Redeployment Procedure which is available on the BT SSC Knowledge base. This should be applied prior to advertising of the vacant post, although this is not always possible.

5.2 When an individual is being considered for an advertised post, the recruitment procedure must be put on hold pending full consideration of the individual's suitability for re-deployment.

6.0 APPENDICES

To access an appendix, click on the relevant title.

Appendix A	<u>Protected Characteristics</u>
Appendix B	<u>Occupational Requirements</u>
Appendix C	<u>Positive Action</u>
Appendix D	<u>Interview Panel</u>
Appendix E	<u>Reasonable Adjustments</u>
Appendix F	<u>Selection Tests</u>
Appendix G	<u>Interview Questions</u>
Appendix H	<u>Interviews</u>
Appendix I	<u>Induction</u>
Appendix J	<u>Giving Feedback</u>

Appendix A: Protected Characteristics

There are 9 characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are defined below.

Age

Age in the Act refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

In most circumstances, a person will have the protected characteristic of disability if they have had a disability in the past, even if they no longer have the disability.

Gender reassignment

People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex have the protected characteristics of gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage covers any formal union of a man and woman which is legally recognised in the UK as a marriage. A civil partnership refers to a registered civil partnership under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, including those registered outside the UK.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

Sex

Sex refers to a man or a woman of any age.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Appendix B: Useful Guidance on Occupational Requirements

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to treat people less favourably in employment because of their protected characteristic. However, in certain limited circumstances it is lawful to discriminate in work for which the protected characteristic of the worker is an occupational requirement (OR). Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010 provides an exception to the requirements of the Act and allows a job to be restricted to a particular protected characteristic provided certain statutory conditions are met.

ORs are interpreted very narrowly by the tribunals since it is a derogation from the principle of equal treatment, and can *only* be applied in relation to work if an employer can show that having regard to the nature or context of work:

- the requirement is an occupational requirement;
- the application of the requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim; and
- the applicant or worker does not meet the requirement; or
- the employer has reasonable grounds for not being satisfied that the applicant or worker meets the requirement.

Managers wishing to claim an OR must bear in mind the following points:

1. ORs should be identified at the beginning of the recruitment process, *before* the vacancy is advertised.
2. If a manager wishes to claim an OR, he/she must consider what the duties are for which an exemption is to be claimed: an OR cannot be claimed unless some or all of those duties are covered and an assessment has been made showing that it would be unreasonable to require existing employees of the appropriate characteristic to undertake those duties. Also it must be shown that those duties *must* be carried out to achieve the objectives of the job.
3. An OR exemption cannot be claimed in relation to particular duties if the manager already has sufficient employees who are capable of carrying out the required duties, and whom it would be reasonable to employ on those duties without undue inconvenience.
4. Each job for which an OR may apply must be considered individually; it should not be assumed that because an OR exists for one job it also exists for jobs of a similar nature or in a similar location. The nature or extent of the relevant duties may be different or there may be other employees who could undertake those duties.
5. An OR can only be claimed where it is *necessary* for the relevant duties to be carried out by a specified protected characteristic, not merely because it is preferable.
6. An OR must be reassessed on each occasion a post becomes vacant to ensure that it can still be validly claimed. Circumstances may have changed, rendering the OR inapplicable.
7. An OR cannot be used to establish or maintain a balance or quota of male and female employees.
8. ORs do not apply to dismissal.
9. ORs are always open to challenge by an aggrieved individual. The burden of proof lies with the employer to establish the validity of an ORs by providing evidence to substantiate a claim.
10. Only an Employment Tribunal or a higher court can give an authoritative ruling as to whether or not a OR is valid.

Appendix C: Useful Guidance on Positive Action

What is Positive Action?

The positive action provisions mean that it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate, if the employer **reasonably** thinks the candidate:

- has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce; or
- that people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

Some information or evidence will be required to indicate to the employer that one of those conditions exists – but it does not need to be sophisticated statistical data or research. It may simply involve an employer looking at the profiles of their workforce and/or making enquiries of other comparable employers in the area or sector as a whole. Additionally, it could involve looking at national data such as labour force surveys.

Positive Action does not allow an employer to appoint a **less suitable candidate** just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented or disadvantaged.

In practice, it allows an employer faced with making a choice between two or more candidates who are of **equal merit** to take into consideration whether one is from a group that is disproportionately under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged within the workforce. This is sometimes called either a 'tie-breaker' or the 'tipping point'.

But this kind of positive action is only allowed where it is a **proportionate** way of addressing the under-representation or disadvantage.

'Proportionate' refers to the balancing of all the relevant factors. In considering using the positive action provisions, an employer will need to balance the seriousness of the disadvantage suffered or the extent to which people with a protected characteristic are under-represented against the impact that the proposed action may have on other people.

Example

A counselling service for teenagers has no employees who are Muslim, despite being located in an area of high Muslim population. When a vacancy arises, two candidates of equal merit are in a tiebreaker situation with the employer having to find some way to choose between them. One candidate is Muslim and the other candidate is not. The service manager could choose to offer the job to the Muslim candidate. This would be allowed under the positive action provisions, so the non-Muslim candidate could not claim unlawful religious discrimination.

When can you use positive action?

Positive action can be used at any time in the recruitment or promotion process.

How is positive action different from positive *discrimination*?

Positive discrimination, which is unlawful in Great Britain, is recruiting or promoting a person solely because they have a relevant protected characteristic. However, it is important to note that it is **not unlawful** for an employer to treat a disabled person more favourably in comparison to a non-disabled person.

Appendix D: Useful Guidance on Interview Panel

Constitution of the Panel

- Interview panels will normally be made up of at least two members. The number of panel members may be larger for particular levels and types of job. Generally, good practice is to keep the panel as small as possible as this is less intimidating for candidates
- There are no restrictions on the grading of panel members or the Chair but the panel should comprise those with the most appropriate knowledge and experience to judge applicants against the requirements of the job
- Although it is not always possible to achieve a balance, consideration should be given to the constitution of panels in terms of gender, race and disability but the key issue is to have the most appropriate panel members who are best placed to judge the suitability of the candidates. At least one member of the panel should represent the line management of the post.
- It is advisable to seek advice from BT SSC where the panel where the panel is less experienced and requires additional support and guidance
- Staff should not take part in any recruitment involving a relative, personal relationship or where there might be a conflict of interests. It is for panel members to make any such relationships/conflicts known.

The panel should meet before the set of interviews to agree:

- the role and area of questioning of each panel member
- the structure of the interview
- the lines of questioning necessary to establish whether each candidate meets the person specification
- the procedure by which a decision will be made
- the panel should ensure these decisions are fully documented.

The role of the Panel Chair

The Chair is responsible for:

- ensuring the procedural integrity of the whole recruitment and selection process
- ensuring that the Council's equal opportunities policy is actively pursued and that no unlawful or other discriminatory action takes place at any stage in the process
- convening the short-listing meeting and ensuring agreement on short-list criteria and weighting, and the type of evidence they are seeking, where appropriate.
- introducing the panel and explaining the process to each candidate.
- withdraw inappropriate questions during the interview
- helping arrive at a consensus when members of the panel have opposing views
- oversee domestic arrangements
- communicating with candidates on behalf of the panel
- arranging for feedback to unsuccessful candidates where they request this.

Appendix E: Useful Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments

What is the duty to make reasonable adjustments?

The duty to make reasonable adjustments comprises three requirements. Employers are required to take reasonable steps to:

- avoid the substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of the employer puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled
- remove or alter a physical feature or provide a reasonable means of avoiding such a feature where it puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled
- provide an auxiliary aid (which includes an auxiliary service) where a disabled person would, but for the provision of that auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled.

Which disabled people does the duty protect?

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies in recruitment and during all stages of employment, including dismissal. It may also apply after employment has ended. The duty relates to all disabled workers of an employer and to any disabled applicant for employment. The duty also applies in respect of any disabled person who has notified the employer that they may be an applicant for work.

What is reasonable?

The Act does not define “reasonable”, or give a complete list of what reasonable adjustments may be. However, it does set out four tests of reasonableness:

1. The effectiveness in preventing disadvantage - how much will a reasonable adjustment reduce the disadvantage? The more effective an adjustment is in reducing disadvantage, the more reasonable it is likely to be.
2. The practicality of the step - it is more likely that an employer will be expected to take a step that is easy than to take a step that is hard. If disadvantage can easily be removed by changing the way things are done, or the equipment that is used, then the adjustment is likely to be considered reasonable.
3. The financial and other costs and the extent of any disruption caused - when trying to decide whether an adjustment would be reasonable, the cost of the adjustment and any disruption it might cause should also be considered. Cost is not just about the price of making physical adaptations, for example, but also:
 - how experienced and skilled the employee concerned is;
 - the cost of replacing that employee;
 - how long the employee has been with the organisation, and
 - whether the adjustment may be of benefit to other employees (disabled and non-disabled)
4. The extent of an organisation's financial and other resources.

Practical examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments in relation to the interview may include:

- changing the venue/room so that it is accessible
- changing the timing of the interview for those who have difficulty travelling at peak times
- ensuring that the candidate is not discriminated against in any tests which are relevant to the job being applied for
- depending on the circumstances, you may need to advise reception and/or the person meeting the candidate that the individual has an impairment, so that their needs can be properly considered beforehand.

Reasonable adjustments in employment may include:

- rearranging the furniture in the office e.g. making wider spaces between desks and making sure an individual's workspace is in a specific location
- altering working hours to make it easier for a disabled person to travel outside rush hours
- providing a text-phone (minicom) for a deaf person and booking a sign language interpreter for particular meetings or occasions
- installing voice recognition software on a computer for someone who is blind or partially-sighted, or providing notes on disk, email or audio-cassette
- allocating some duties to another person
- assigning them to a different workplace
- adding a ramp to a building for a wheelchair user
- allowing absence during working hours for treatment, rehabilitation and assessment

Reasonable Adjustments for Mental Health Issues

As with physical disabilities, the type of reasonable adjustment required for someone with a mental health problem will vary according to their needs, and you should never make assumptions. However, the following should be taken into account when considering an applicant who has declared a mental health issue:-

- they may apply for a position that they are over-qualified for, in order to regain confidence after recovery;
- their application may have gaps in their work history;
- they may appear to have poor interpersonal skills; and
- they may have had difficulties in previous employment because reasonable adjustments were not made.

During the selection process:-

- the candidate may wish to be accompanied by a friend or adviser;
- you may need to allow them extra time during the interview and any exercises, to allow them as much opportunity as possible to demonstrate their suitability;
- consider using individual rather than group exercises; and
- give a clear and thorough explanation of the process and what is required of them.

If they are selected for the post, then potential reasonable adjustments at work could include:-

- accepting a higher level of sick absence than would normally be considered acceptable;
- flexibility in allowing annual leave e.g. allowing leave to be taken at short notice;
- flexibility in working hours and arrangements, including working from home;
- adjusting the way in which work is arranged e.g. breaking up a single demanding task with a number of smaller tasks;

- giving permission to contact a support professional by phone during the working day;
- providing written instructions, giving a clear structure for work, and ensuring the volume of work is neither too much or too little;
- allowing time off to attend medical or therapy appointments;
- ensuring that fellow colleagues know, understand and tolerate any unusual behaviour (e.g. humming or talking to themselves);
- limiting the amount of work conducted over the telephone.

This is not an exhaustive list and any reasonable adjustments should obviously be made in consultation with the disabled person involved.

Access to Work Programme

Access to Work is a programme run by the Department of Work and Pensions and provides support to disabled people to help them overcome work related obstacles resulting from their disability.

It is important for disabled staff who think they may be able to qualify for the Access to Work Programme, to discuss this with their line manager. Application to the Access to Work Programme should be made by the disabled person within six weeks of starting work at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview> in order for Access to Work to pay up to 100% of the costs.

Access to Work applies to any paid job, part-time or full-time, permanent or temporary.

Any members of staff who are or become disabled under the criteria of the **Equality Act** are eligible to apply for a grant from Access to Work irrespective of the length of time at the Council, though in these cases the Access to Work Scheme may not meet 100% of the costs. Access to Work will however pay up to 100% of the approved cost of equipment, or adaptations over £10,000. In all applications an additional voluntary contribution will be requested.

Once an application is made, a needs assessment is then undertaken by an Access to Work Adviser. In some instances, they may arrange for an assessment to be undertaken in the workplace by an independent assessor, who prepares a report setting out the minimum requirements to meet the disability requirements, and the estimated cost. A copy of this report is sent to the disabled person and the identified options part, to the council. The onus is then on the service where the disabled person works, to purchase the equipment and then claim the grant back from Access to Work.

Practical advice and help is tailored to suit individual needs for a three-year period, after which time an individual's case is reviewed. Practical help can include aids for communication, special equipment, alterations to premises or the working environment, a support worker, (if practical help is needed at work, or getting to work), assistance with communication (for example a reader at work for someone who is blind, or a communicator for deaf people) and travel where a disabled person is unable to use public transport.

Appendix F: Useful Guidance on Selection Tests

It is good practice, in addition to an interview, that other selection methods are used to

supplement the outcomes of the interview, and provide further evidence for the panel in reaching a decision. These are usually given some weighting and the weighting is agreed at this stage. Some suggestions are given below. There is evidence that job-related tests have high validity and can be a useful complement to a structured interview process.

Any supplementary methods used in addition to interviews must be justifiable in relation to the requirements of the job description and selection criteria. Any supplementary techniques must be scrutinised for fairness when applied to each candidate. Tests must be free from any unjustifiable bias in content or in scoring. This is particularly relevant in relation to disabilities, for example dyslexia. Contact BT SSC for further advice.

Possible methods include:

- **Presentations.** Presentations may be used to assess the behaviours and values of candidates applying for posts including those that require a complex set of skills, together with specific professional/academic knowledge. By asking candidates to prepare and deliver a presentation on a given subject, and in some cases to participate in a discussion afterwards, selectors can see an example of the individual's skills of written or oral presentation, analysis and reasoning, as well as gaining some evidence of their professional/academic knowledge and of their attitudes. Asking candidates to produce a piece of written work on a given subject in advance of the interview can be used to check written skills, ability to structure an argument and research subject knowledge.
- **Case Studies.** As with presentations, case studies can be a valuable way of assessing a candidate's knowledge of a particular subject area, and their likely approach to handling a particular situation. This selection method is sometimes used for candidates for managerial posts, or for posts requiring knowledge of specific procedures, regulations or legislation.
- **Skills Tests.** Skills tests are used where candidates need to possess a particular skill in order to perform the job, e.g. typing, ICT skills, driving a motor vehicle, or operating a piece of machinery. Many such skills are taught and tested by outside bodies, in which case candidates are likely to hold certificates of proficiency. However, where candidates do not hold such certificates, or where they have been obtained several years ago, it may be appropriate to devise a short skills test. Other examples may include:-
 - Asking candidates to read a document and discussing it at the interview –tests ability to foster thoughts clearly and quickly.
 - A written test (e.g. correspondence drafting) – tests ability to work under pressure and produce quality written work to deadlines.
 - An in-tray exercise – assesses ability to prioritise and plan workload.
- **Group selection methods** are most frequently used to assess candidates' leadership qualities and their ability to express themselves clearly and get on with and influence colleagues. The types of exercise which are used include:
 - Leaderless group discussions;
 - Command or executive exercises (e.g. outward bound);
 - Group problem solving.

Group exercises are time consuming and, therefore, costly. However, they may be particularly useful for appointments requiring good leadership and communication skills.

- **Assessment Centres.** An assessment centre combining various exercises, tests and interviews. An assessment centre may also require candidates to engage in a group exercise during which assessors observe their interpersonal skills.
- **Psychometric tests.** There are three types of psychometric test:
 - Tests of ability, aptitude or intelligence;
 - Questionnaires to measure "personality";
 - Questionnaires to establish interests and preferences.

These tests are administered via the BT SSC. Please contact BT SSC for further advice.

Appendix G: Useful Guidance on Interview Questions

- Formulate questions based on the selection criteria to assess and score candidates' knowledge and skills.
- remember that interviews are behaviour based
- the Manager's Portal contains a Behaviour Based Question Guide that includes exemplar questions
- Before you shortlist or interview, as a panel, you should agree some indicators or model answers highlighting the type of **evidence** you are looking for against each selection criteria.

example

Selection Criteria	Indicators
Ability to effectively manage a budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of budget management in a paid or unpaid capacity - Can describe strategies to avoid overspends - Evidence of contingency planning in budget management - Can explain how they have monitored a budget

- Use open questions to encourage candidates to talk freely. Avoid asking multiple questions at once as this can confuse the candidate.
- All candidates should be asked broadly the same questions based on the criteria set out in the selection criteria and designed to test the candidate's suitability, transferable skills, experience etc. However, the interview should also be structured around the individual so supplementary probing questions can also be used. This also demonstrates to the candidate that the panel is listening and interested in what they have to say.
- If you wish to develop your own questions decide on the behaviours that you are looking for evidence of and change the behaviour statement into a question e.g. Target Behaviour: Collaboratively works as part of a team to achieve service objectives.

Starter Question: Tell me about a time when you have worked as part of a team to achieve service objectives?

Follow up Questions: What was the objective? What did you do? How? What did you do then? How did you ensure the objectives were met? Who else was involved?

Questioning Process

- ✓ **INTRODUCE** Dimension to be investigated.
- ✓ Ask first **STARTER** question.
- ✓ Ask **FOLLOW UP** questions until a complete Circumstance, Action Result (**C.A.R.**) is obtained.
- ✓ **ASK** further questions until enough **C.A.R.s** are obtained for the Dimension.
- ✓ Move on to the **NEXT** Dimension.

Starter questions

These are used to get the candidate talking, leaving an open field in which to answer. They are useful as the first question in identifying the circumstance, using the 'funnelling technique' whereby questions get more specific as they home in on the area in which the questioner is particularly interested.

- "Tell me about..."
- "What happened when...?"
- "Give me an example of..."

Follow-up questions

These questions collect evidence of the actions the candidate has taken. They are the questions that can tease out the really interesting areas and details of a particular topic. Following an open question, they allow the questioner to "narrow the funnel" and concentrate on specific areas.

- "What happened then?"
- "How did you...?"
- "Who was involved?"
- "What was the result?"

Summaries

It is often very useful to reflect back to an individual what has been said, to obtain clarification and ensure that you have understood them. It also allows someone to add to their initial response by giving them further information.

- "You didn't seem to enjoy that experience?"
 - "Are you saying that...?"
 - "You say that he over-reacted?"
-
- Move smoothly between questions, trying to link the starter questions to areas on the application form, or experiences outlined by the candidate.
 - Some questions may ask for an example of where something did not work out, but the balance should be in favour of those that ask for positive evidence. You should always start with asking for a positive example. However, where you are getting a very strong impression of a candidate's ability, either positive or negative, ask for contrary evidence i.e. an example opposite to the impression you are gaining.

Questions to Avoid

Closed questions

- Elicit a Yes or No response and have limited application.

Leading questions

- Lead the subject to give the answer they believe the questioner wants to hear. For example:

"I suppose you checked it out first?"

"I take it you didn't have any trouble sorting it out?"

Multiple questions

- Where two or more questions are asked at once. Candidates find these confusing and will often only answer part of the question. For example:

"So why did you go there and how long were you there?"

"What did you do? Did you have a chance to carry on your research?"

Hypothetical questions

- Hypothetical questions ask the respondent to comment on an imaginary situation set out by the questioner. They therefore can elicit whether or not an individual knows what to do in a given situation but cannot discover if that is the course of action that would be followed in a real-life situation. It is much more useful to ask a person to describe

how they have dealt with situations in the past and, by probing, get them to give all the details required. For example:

“What would you do if a member of the public became abusive towards you?”

becomes

“Tell me about a time when a member of the public became abusive towards you?”

- Regardless of their limited usefulness, hypothetical questions are surprisingly popular with interviewers. They can be useful to confirm knowledge of procedures, finding out how an individual’s mind works on technical problems, or getting an individual to transfer their existing knowledge/experience to a new area of work. **BUT** they will normally get a hypothetical answer, which cannot be relied on to decide whether an individual really can do or would do a particular thing. In general, they should be avoided.

Unfocused or general questions

- Questions that are unfocused or too general result in the candidate waffling and giving vague answers. For example:

“How did you make decisions?”

“How do you go about...?”

Illegal or discriminatory questions

- Do not ask questions about personal circumstances unless they are relevant to the post e.g. if the post involves unusual working hours or frequent evening work and you need to assess whether this will present a problem to the candidate. Such questions should be discussed and agreed in the pre-interview briefing, and questioning allocated to a panel member who is fully aware of equality considerations. The same question must be asked of each candidate and the answer accepted. If you have any doubts about the suitability of a question then it is probably best not to ask it. For example:

“Have you any domestic commitments which might make it difficult to work split shifts?”

– This is unacceptable as it places a heavy emphasis on establishing domestic commitments and the interview panel determining their relevance.

Whereas:-

“Could you confirm that you understand this post has a requirement to work split shifts. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement” – This would be acceptable as it brings the shift working to the attention of the candidate and without the need to disclose their domestic arrangements, permits the candidate to assess their availability.

If questions are asked by any member of the panel that could be deemed discriminatory, either the Chair or another member of the panel should intervene and redirect the questioning.

- If the candidate has declared that they have a disability, do not ask what their disability is or how it arose, about their level of attendance/sickness absence or what they can or cannot do. The only question that can be asked is whether they can carry out a function that is intrinsic to the job or a follow-up question about any necessary reasonable adjustment needed to carry out that function.

Appendix H: Useful Guidance on Interviews

The aim of the interview is to select the best person for the role. The role of panel members is to ensure that candidates are put at ease and given the best opportunity to 'sell' themselves.

It is important to cover the following areas at the beginning of the interview:

The chair of the selection interview panel will:

1. Introduce all interview panel members. Tell candidate what the procedure is in the event that the fire alarm goes off.
2. Explain to each candidate that the interview questions are related to the selection criteria and that each candidate will be asked the same initial questions. It is useful to have a copy of the selection criteria available for the candidate to refer to.
3. Ask the candidate to give as full an answer as possible to each interview question and not to assume that the interview panel has prior knowledge about their skills and experience. Inform them that they should include information on their application form, if appropriate, as it was used for short listing purposes and not available to the panel today.
4. Tell the candidate that the interview panel will be making notes throughout the interview so that they can refer back to them at the end of the interview process. This may mean that eye contact cannot always be maintained.
5. Tell the candidate not to hesitate to ask if they need a question repeated, or defer a question and return to it at the end.
6. Tell the candidate that there will be time at the end of the interview for them to ask questions they may have.
7. Inform candidate how feedback will be provided, from whom and likely timing.

Relaxing the Candidate

- It is important that you relax the candidate during the interview. A relaxed candidate is more likely to give you information about what they cannot do which will help you to make an assessment.
- Help the candidate to relax by looking interested, make eye contact and using positive body language. Head nods, tone of voice and 'uh-huh' noises create and encourage an interested atmosphere.
- Be sympathetic to difficult evidence and praise their achievements. It is important that your responses come across as genuine.

Listening and Responding

- The answers that candidates provide to your questions will provide the evidence on which you are able to base your assessment. It is important that you allow the candidate time to talk and give you full answers.
- Only use further questions when it is necessary to probe, control or lead on to the next topic. A common fault is for the interviewer to work too hard, talk too much and hence reduce the amount of evidence collected from the candidate. Resist the temptation to fill silence and allow the candidate time to think and reply.
- Concentrate on "how" as well as "what" the candidate is saying, in order to do this you will need to position yourself so that you can see the candidate clearly.
- Demonstrate to the candidate that you are listening by asking questions that relate to things they have told you, by reflecting on appropriate points and summarising to test your understanding.
- If the candidate is diverting from the subject, it may be necessary to interrupt them. Do so by explaining the need to move on to other areas. Remember that while you are

trying to interrupt you will not be listening to the content so you may miss important information.

All too often, interviewers fail, due to any one of a whole range of distractions, to pay attention in the first place to what the interviewee is saying, or else they hear the words, because of a series of filters which are deeply embedded in their minds, they either fail to pick up, or distort the meaning. When acquiring information be wary of distorting the incoming message due to:-

- **Prejudices** - on the basis of something as simple as what the other person is wearing, their accent, or their status, we may base a whole host of suppositions which lead us to filter everything the other person says and that filter may be either a favourable or an unfavourable one, depending on the nature of the conclusions we have jumped to.
- **Assumptions** - hearing what we want to hear, because we assume that everyone else must see the world the same way we do. We may switch off because we believe that what the other person is going to say will be boring, or because we think we have heard it all before.
- **Emotions** - if what the other person says arouses our hostility or anger, these emotions may either cause a distortion of the message or simply block out our ability to listen to it at all.
- **Cultural Factors** - people from different disciplines, backgrounds or levels or environments may have totally different values which act as a barrier to understanding between them.
- **Semantics** - similarly, different people may use words in different ways, or use terms which other people are unfamiliar with, making it difficult to follow what they saying.

Note Taking and Documentation

- During the interview you will need to take notes to help you remember the evidence the candidate gives you. It is easy to forget what someone said in an interview, particularly if you are interviewing more than one candidate in a day. You should record key words only, not verbatim, and make notes consistently throughout the interview. Make sure that you explain to the candidate why you are taking notes.
- When you set up the interview room ensure that it will be comfortable for you to take notes, you may find it useful to use a clipboard.
- Immediately after the interview, an assessment should be considered for each candidate. This ensures a written record and will assist in deciding on the successful applicant
- You may be required to produce the assessment form as evidence of fair practice and compliance with law.

- For candidates who are your colleagues, it can be easy to judge them based on what you already know about them. Please note; assessment should always be made on the evidence and submissions obtained that are integral to the recruitment and selection process. You must assume you **do not** know the candidates and tell the candidates to do the same.

- Understand that the process can be daunting for candidates especially for those who have not been in an interview situation for a long time. During the interview, you may rephrase a question or probe for further information in order to illicit as much information as possible to measure against the selection criteria. This may vary in each candidate's case.

- Assessment should be based on evidence not assertions such as 'I am excellent at' or 'I have communication skills'.
- Remember, you are looking for the best fit to the job by comparing the candidate's evidence against selection criteria **not** making comparisons between candidates.

Appendix I: Useful Guidance on Induction

The period following appointment is a particularly important time in ensuring that new staff settle in quickly, receive the right encouragement and information, and gain a good impression of the organisation. Please refer to the Induction Policy available on the BT SSC Knowledge base. At least, managers should ensure that:

- New staff receive adequate and timely induction training. This should cover important areas such as Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity awareness, pay and key HR policies, together with information about the establishment and the Council as a whole.
- New starters are made aware of the Council's probation procedure. Line managers also need to be aware of the importance of this process.
- When a disabled person has accepted a job, offer them the opportunity to discuss their employment needs before starting. A well planned induction is important for all new employees, for a disabled person it is an excellent way of giving them confidence and easing them into the work environment.
- They identify any particular needs for disabled starters as early as possible after appointment, since the arrangement of some facilities may take some time. Where it is known that someone with a disability is to be appointed, establish with the individual concerned and with HR, what provision needs to be made.

Points to consider:

- Check the building is accessible (e.g. location of parking spaces) when appointing a person with a mobility disability.
- After full consultation with the person concerned and with their consent, brief colleagues on any first-aid implications of hidden disabilities such as epilepsy, diabetes.
- Make sure that any new member of staff is made aware of emergency procedures. This should include knowing how to raise the alarm and where escape routes are situated.
- Ensure that escape procedures are effective in meeting the needs of disabled members of staff and are well known (discuss the best method with the disabled people themselves) and communicate this information to all members of staff in the service.
- Appoint someone in the service to assist a disabled member of staff in the event of a fire.

Appendix J: Useful Guidance on Giving Feedback

Feedback would usually be given to all unsuccessful internal candidates and external candidates who request for it. Feedback should be constructive and confidential.

Feedback should:

- Be given on the basis that the information may be helpful to candidates in future applications.
- Discuss only items which are relevant to the selection criteria.
- Avoid generalities that attempt to be kind to the candidate. This can leave them confused about why they did not get the job. Avoid saying for example 'you did a very good interview.'
- Refer to particular criteria indicating where the panel felt the candidate strengths and areas of development lie whilst being specific. Eg. We felt you gave sufficient evidence on managing a team but were weak in relation to the requirement for understanding project management. You might have talked about Gantt charts as tools to help with this. This approach can minimise challenges and enable candidates to recognise that they have been fairly treated.
- Be constructive suggesting areas of their work where they might want to get more experience in relation to the selection criteria.
- Explain the capabilities the individual would probably need to demonstrate in order to secure a similar job in the future.
- Do not get into arguments with the candidate – they may be disappointed or emotional – try to keep matters objective and factual.
- Be aware that you might be quoted or recorded.