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# Recruitment and Selection Policy

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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**WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 Warrington Borough Council, as an aware employer, is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as its number one priority.
- 1.2 Implementing this policy will assist in improving the Council's recruitment and selection process. It will also provide a safer practice in the recruitment of staff or volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, in conjunction with the Policy on Safe Recruitment and Vetting.
- 1.3 This Policy is for external publication as well as internal use, to assist in transparency and public confidence in how we recruit.
- 1.4 As a Council we are committed to equality of opportunity. We will recruit, train and develop our employees on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the job. To ensure we recruit the best person for the job, selection for any vacant post will be based on merit. Appointments will only be made for those candidates who have best demonstrated that they meet the selection criteria and the requirements to do the job.
- 1.5 We recognise that valuing diversity in the workplace is a major way forward in addressing inequality, unfairness, social inclusion and the discrimination some people may face in their lives. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Council's Fair Employment Statement.
- 1.6 The Council is committed to working towards creating a working climate in which all employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect and recognises its duty of care to employees. All workers, especially those who have responsibility for others, share this duty of care and the Council therefore expects all workers to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.
- 1.7 United Kingdom legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a person based on their:
- disability
  - gender, including gender reassignment
  - marital status
  - race
  - age
  - sexual orientation
  - religion or belief

- 1.8 In order to address issues relating to diversity and social inclusion, and to sustain public confidence in all our recruitment and selection practices, we are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community, e.g. in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social inclusion etc., which will help the Council understand and respond more effectively to community needs.
- 1.9 From time to time, where justified, we may engage in special targeted recruitment initiatives. In response to under-representation of particular groups and individuals, parts of the process may be adjusted, with the prior agreement of the Head of HR, however the main underlying principles will remain.
- 1.10 We believe that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. It is our aim that this Policy and associated Code of Practice (COP) and all other related policies, practices and procedures are devised and developed to help us eliminate all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- 1.11 This Policy, like any other policy, must be followed. Any Council employee, Elected Member or other person involved in any aspects of recruitment and selection under the Policy and Code of Practice must adhere to its requirements. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- 1.12 Recruitment and Selection training is compulsory, for all managers likely to be involved in recruitment activity, and it is a requirement that a least one member of any selection panel has received such training. Once trained, a 'licence to recruit' will be issued, which must be renewed every 3 years.
- 1.13 Training will be provided on the policy and associated COP to employees, Elected Members and any third parties who may be involved with recruitment and selection on behalf of the Council, e.g. community representatives, service users and external partners.
- 1.14 The policy and COP does not directly apply to recruitment in schools, although it is recommended to recruiters in schools as a model of good practice.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff within Warrington Borough Council.
- 2.2 All employees involved at any stage of the recruitment and selection process should be aware of and adhere to the contents of this policy. In addition, any external consultants, recruitment agencies or external experts who assist in the recruitment process must act in accordance with this policy.

2.3 This policy only contains the outline stages and broad principles underpinning the Council's approach to recruitment and selection. Various processes and more detailed guidelines exist to support the effective and fair implementation of this policy. These are covered within the Code of Practice and other related policies and procedures, which are referred to at the end of this document and must be read in conjunction with this policy.

### **3. AIMS**

- to ensure the safe and effective recruitment of anyone working with children or vulnerable adults
- to ensure that recruitment processes are fit for purpose
- to appoint the best person for the job
- to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants
- to ensure compliance with the Council's policies and plans relating to equalities and diversity, and relevant employment legislation
- to promote the Council's values
- to meet the Council's operational requirements and strategic aims

### **4. PREPARATION STAGES**

#### **4.1 Exit Reviews**

4.1.1 Exit reviews have been endorsed as standard practice for all employees leaving WBC employment and must be undertaken across all directorates. It is also recommended practice for employees who voluntarily transfer from one directorate to another.

4.1.2 Exit reviews will take the form of a confidential questionnaire and a discussion. An analysis of the quantitative data, such as reasons for leaving and patterns and trends in turnover will be undertaken corporately. The analysis of the qualitative data obtained from discussions will be undertaken by each directorate and made available for corporate analysis when requested.

#### **4.2 Job Analysis**

4.2.1 The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the area's strategic plans and budget has been completed. Therefore job analysis must be carried out for every vacant post. This also provides the opportunity to analyse job design, working arrangements and practices.

#### **4.3 Job Description and Person Specification**

4.3.1 Every post requires a current job description and person specification, which should always be reviewed as part of the annual appraisal process (PR&D). The

corporate job description template must be used (see Appendix 4 & 6 of the Code of Practice).

- 4.3.2 Job descriptions and person specifications for all posts must specifically state that the postholder must carry out their duties with full regard to the Council's Equalities Policies and Plans in employment and in service delivery. These requirements should form part of the selection criteria. Any job that has managerial or supervisory requirements, and/or where the grade of the post indicates that equal opportunities and/or diversity is integral to the role, will normally require the job-holder to have a wider knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under these policies and plans.
- 4.3.3 There must also be a reference to Council's Corporate Plan, Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and Social Inclusion Strategy. This is to reinforce the corporate vision that all employees must be working towards continuous improvement and providing services that meet the needs of the community.

## **5. RECRUITMENT**

### **5.1 Selection Panel**

- 5.1.1 Any recruitment and selection process will require a selection panel to be set up, with at least one member of the Selection Panel, having attended the Council's Recruitment and Selection training course and holding a valid 'licence to recruit'. Ideally the selection panel should have three people, but a minimum of two people is essential.
- 5.1.2 In the case of Directors and Second Tier posts, responsibility for making the appointment is conducted by a Committee of the Council, which must include at least one member of the Executive (as set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution).
- 5.1.3 If a member of the panel has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application. It would be necessary for the panel member to avoid any further involvement in the recruitment and selection process.

### **5.2 Advertising**

- 5.2.1 Prior to advertising a vacancy, approval must be given by the Head of Service in accordance with the local powers of delegation.
- 5.2.2 All permanent Council vacancies will be subject to open competition, and advertised internally and externally concurrently, except in the circumstances listed below:

- (i) Where one half of a job-share post leaves, the other job-share partner should be offered the full-time job (see Job Share Policy), before it is advertised.
- (ii) Employees on the redeployment register must be considered before advertising a vacancy.
- (iii) The job being advertised has been restructured as part of a positive action initiative to encourage applications from groups of disabled people who are underrepresented in the workforce.

5.2.3 All posts (excluding schools) advertised must be centrally processed to ensure consistency of practice by the Advertisement Team. Only in exceptional circumstances (and by agreement of the Chief Executive) will any other arrangements be acceptable.

5.2.4 Consideration must be given to the appropriate media and how best to reach all members of the community, ensuring no one group will be disadvantaged. Cost and effectiveness will influence the choice.

### 5.3 Applications

5.3.1 The Council does not accept Curriculum Vitae's (CV's). The majority of applicants must complete a standard application form. Provision should be allowed for the acceptance of applications, in alternative formats, where appropriate, e.g.; audio, visual, additional sheets or completed on behalf of the applicant.

5.3.2 All applicants expressing interest in the vacant post will receive a recruitment pack containing further information including, as a minimum, a job description and person specification.

5.3.3 Upon request, the information to applicants should be available in Braille, large print, by audio tape and/or translated into community languages. Closing dates may need to be extended to allow for translations or the return of applications in other formats.

### 5.4 Shortlisting

5.4.1 Every application form must be read and assessed against the criterion on the person specification. Full guidance on completing shortlisting is given in the Code of Practice.

5.4.2 The Council operates the 'Two Ticks' Positive About Disabled People symbol, which operates a positive action initiative in relation to disabled people. If there are disabled applicants who have demonstrated that they meet the minimum essential selection criteria, they must be placed on the shortlist and guaranteed an interview.

## 5.5 Travel Expenses

5.5.1 Travel expenses incurred in connection with the attendance at interview will be reimbursed, for standard class travel, on completion of the interview expense form and should have the appropriate receipts attached. Some restrictions apply.

## 6. **SELECTION**

### 6.1 Methods of Selection

6.1.1 The panel must agree the methods by which it will assess and select candidates. The process at each stage should be the same for each candidate. All methods of assessment will relate to the criteria in the person specification.

6.1.2 Regardless of what earlier or additional assessment methods are used, the final stage of selection to a post with access to children or vulnerable adults must always include a face to face interview.

6.1.3 Assessment and selection methods will be designed to be free from unnecessary barriers or unjustifiable bias. The Council will endeavour to accommodate any special requirements of candidates with disabilities, and to make arrangements that facilitate accessibility.

### 6.2 Appointment

6.2.1 Any offer of employment must only be made to candidates who meet the relevant selection criteria, and in normal circumstances, to the candidate identified as the “best” candidate by the selection panel. Offers of employment will be confirmed in writing, although may be initially communicated by telephone. Offers of employment will remain conditional until and upon the receipt and clearance of all pre-employment checking, to the satisfaction of the Council. These include:

- **References** - two written references must be obtained, one being from the current or most recent employer.
- **Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures** - for certain identified posts, in accordance with the Police Act 1997.
- **Asylum and Immigration** - checks regarding entitlement to work in the UK must be made for all prospective employees who are not currently employed by the Council.
- **Medical clearance** - a pre-employment questionnaire must be completed, and where deemed necessary an appointment with our Occupational Health Service.

- **Qualification and Registration Certificates** - checks must be made to ensure the relevant qualifications have been awarded and any necessary registration is up to date.
- 6.2.2 A firm offer of employment must only be made when all the relevant documentation has been cleared.
- 6.2.3 For guidance on what to do if a positive CRB check is received, see the Policy on Safe Recruitment and Vetting.
- 6.2.4 In the case of a Strategic Director and Head of Service, (first and second tier posts) an offer of appointment cannot be made until the Executive Members have been notified of the name and other relevant particulars of the prospective employee and given the opportunity to inform the Leader of the Council within 24 hours if they have any objection to the appointment.
- 6.2.5 Once all the necessary checks have been satisfied, a written statement of particulars of employment must be issued, ideally with the offer letter, but in any case, within 8 weeks of the appointment being taken up.
- 6.2.6 Where an appointed candidate decides not to take up post or leaves within 6 months of being appointed, the selection panel may offer the post to a suitable reserve candidate. An offer must only be made to candidates who met the relevant selection criteria.
- 6.2.7 In the event of an allegation of unlawful or unfair treatment in the selection process, or that the panel have failed to follow the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Code of Practice or Equality Policy, the candidate will have the right to have his or her complaint considered in accordance with the Council's agreed Complaints Procedure.

## **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 Monitoring is an integral part of the Council's policies and plans for Equality and Diversity, which seek to tackle any negative issues relating to equality and diversity. It is essential to monitor the recruitment and selection process to assist in the identification of any trends that indicate bias or unlawful or unfair treatment of individuals or groups of people at any stage.
- 7.2 Monitoring of all applications is reported annually helping to highlight employment trends in relation to recruitment and retention. We also have a duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to monitor and report our workforce profiles.

7.3 The legal framework on which this Policy and COP has been based is under constant review and is subject to change, therefore these documents will be regularly reviewed to reflect any changes in the legal framework.

## **8. OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS**

8.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice
- Safe Recruitment and Vetting Policy
- Fair Employment Statement of Intent

8.2 Other related policies are:

- Job Share Policy
- Relationships at Work Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Redeployment Policy
- Corporate Equality & Diversity Policy

## **9. FURTHER INFORMATION**

9.1 Further advice and guidance on this policy or specific circumstances covered by this policy can be obtained from your directorate Human Resources Officer.

9.2 If you would like to comment on the content of the policy, please contact the Policy and Strategy Team within Human Resources on 01925 443891 or [Policy&StrategyTeam@Warrington.gov.uk](mailto:Policy&StrategyTeam@Warrington.gov.uk).

9.3 This Policy and Code of Practice are also available in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, on audio tape or community languages if requested.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT**

**WHAT IS WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S POSITION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?**

Warrington Borough Council aims to have a culture where everyone is valued and where differences, whether visible or not, are welcomed. All employees will be recruited, trained and developed on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the job.

Warrington Borough Council is committed to building an organisation that makes full use of the talents, skills, experience, and different cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic society, where, people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their potential regardless of race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or religion or belief.

**WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS?**

The legal foundation is primarily set out in the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act (Amended), the Equal Pay Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, The Gender Recognition Act, Human Rights Act, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and Employment Equality Regulations on age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

Useful guidance is also given in:

- The Equal Opportunities Commission Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.
- The Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.
- The Department of Education and Employment's revised Code of Practice on the employment of disabled people.

Failure to comply with the legislation could make the Authority, and in some cases individuals, liable to legal action. Discrimination, abuse or harassment is not acceptable to this Authority and may result in disciplinary action.

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?**

Councillors have overall responsibility for the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy. The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service are accountable for the

implementation of policy. Line managers and supervisors have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with policy and to reinforce it through management competencies and performance development reviews, to ensure that it is understood and implemented by all staff. All staff have a responsibility for working towards equality and inclusion and for the implementation of policy.

The Head of Human Resources and officers of Human Resources have a special responsibility to recommend and advise upon good practice to promote equal opportunities.

### **HOW IS THE POLICY IMPLEMENTED?**

In addition to the steps, which have already been taken, e.g. objective recruitment and selection, Fair Employment Statement of Intent, job share scheme, flexible working hours, voluntary reduced working time scheme, the Authority intends to build upon this foundation and will strive to:

- a) ensure that all employees and applicants receive equal opportunity in recruitment, training and promotion;
- b) make certain that the obligations imposed under relevant legislation and Codes of Practice are met and complied with;
- c) utilise those statutory provisions which permit special action to be taken to improve recruitment to areas of work where certain groups are under represented;
- d) ensure that discrimination does not exist within service provision and that Council services are widely available to the whole community;
- e) raise awareness and provide appropriate guidance in order to encourage inclusive behaviour towards both the public and fellow employees;
- f) ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not discriminate against any group(s) of employees and service users;
- g) constantly monitor and review the success of the policy through statistical analysis of the composition of the workforce and of the recruitment and selection procedure to highlight any problem areas.