

APPENDIX C

Employment References Policy

May 2022

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Appendix 1

Standard pro-forma

1 Purpose

This policy is designed to give clear guidance for employees and managers about who should receive and respond to a reference request for a former or current employee, as well as guidance on the process that for requesting a reference for an individual who has an offer of employment with the Council.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all permanent or fixed term council employees, except those based in Schools who have their own process. This policy does not cover agency, interim or consultant workers.

An agency worker may request a reference to be provided by Matrix (the Council's contracted master vendor for all agency workers). Matrix will then arrange for a reference to be provided. As agency workers are not council employees, there is no requirement for a reference to be provided by us, references should be provided by their agency who is their employer.

3 Who can provide a reference

It is important that when providing a reference that the information is true, accurate and fair. This service is provided by the HR team who are the only authorised persons who are able to provide written references on Haringey's behalf.

If an employee is asked to provide the name and contact details of a referee they should provide details of the HR Team at humanresources@haringey.gov.uk who can provide an employment reference.

Service managers are not permitted to provide references on behalf of the Council for existing or for previous employees. How to deal with a request for a personal reference which is sent to a named individual for completion is covered in Section 6.

If a reference request is received from an external employer the standard reference will be provided unless an agreed reference as part of a settlement agreement is in place.

4 Standard (Corporate) Employment Reference

The council will provide a standard reference in all cases except where a reference has been agreed as part of a settlement agreement (see Section 5). In these cases, the agreed reference will be used in response to all requests.

The standard reference will be limited to:

- The capacity in which the employee was (or still is) employed, i.e. job title
- Dates of their employment
- In the event that Haringey has a concern about practice or behaviour involving children, young people or vulnerable adults which has led to either a report to Social Work England (SWE) or other relevant professional body OR there has been a sanction under the disciplinary/capability policy, the facts of this would be disclosed during the reference process as a safeguarding concern.

The reference will explain that is the Council's policy to respond to requests for information in a standard format. The standard reference will be provided using the standard pro-forma attached at Appendix 1.

The individual dealing with the reference request should ensure that the individual to whom the request for the reference relates has given their written consent for a reference to be provided. If the person dealing with the request has any doubts about whether or not the individual has given their consent, they must contact the individual to check whether or not they want a reference to be provided.

6 Personal References

The Council does not recommend that an individual council officer provides a personal reference. Where an individual is contacted and asked to provide a personal reference, it is up to the individual to decide whether or not to comply with the request.

If the decision is to give a reference,

- it must not be sent from a council computer, mobile phone, tablet or other device.
- it must clearly state that it is being given in a personal capacity and that it does not reflect the views or opinions of the council.
- it must not be sent on Haringey headed paper.
- It must not be sent via a Haringey email address.

7 Agreed References

A reference may be previously agreed if it is provided as part of a settlement agreement and only this reference should be used for all future requests.

The council reserves the right in any settlement agreement to disclose information that they may be obligated to disclose under any statutory duty. If safeguarding responsibilities come to light after the settlement has been signed, then the council has an obligation to disclose these in addition to the agreed reference.

8 Confidentiality

All references are confidential documents and only those that are necessary and relevant will be involved in providing references. They must not disclose the content of a reference to anyone who is not a party to the process. If the employee who is the subject of the reference being sent to another organisation requests a copy, they must be provided with one.

The council may also be required to disclose a reference in certain circumstances as required by law or if an employee or ex-employee submitted a Subject Access Request then an employment reference which had been provided either by HR team, or by an internal manager may be disclosed. A reference provided to the council from an external organisation could not be disclosed in this circumstance and in this situation the individual the reference is about would need to contact the referee who provided the reference.

9 Requesting a Reference for a job with Haringey

Where an offer of employment with the Council has been made to an individual, references will be sought in line with our Recruitment Policy. In addition, where a role requires an employee or an agency worker or contractor to work in an unsupervised capacity with children or vulnerable adults, appropriate checks concerning their past employment must be made before a job offer can be made.

In addition to an employment reference asking for details of any safeguarding or practice concerns, the following must also be done:

- The interview panel should use the interview to ask for details and reasons for any gaps in the candidate's employment history.
- The HR Compliance team will ensure relevant DBS checks are carried out. The DBS Policy gives further details of this process and of the steps to take if a check is unsatisfactory.
- If the individual is applying for a role as a qualified Social Worker, the HR Compliance team will check the Social Work England register (or equivalent register for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland if relevant) to confirm their registration status.
- If the individual is applying for a role as a Occupational Therapist, the HR Compliance team will check the Health and Care Professions Council register

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APPENDIX 1: Reference Request from Haringey for New Candidates

Private & Confidential

Reference request

Dear

Candidate Information

Name

Post Applied for

Directorate

The above named has applied for the above post, has provided your contact details and permission to request a reference from you.

Please complete the reference request as soon as possible as their appointment cannot be completed until all references have been received.

Please confirm their:

Job title (Current or At time of leaving)

Employment Start Date

Employment End Date

Reason for leaving

Comments (Optional)

Please do contact us if you have any queries on X or X

Yours sincerely

HR Compliance

Reference Request from Haringey for Current or Ex Employees

Private & Confidential

Reference for Ex/Employee Name

Dear

Please find the reference for NAME as requested on xxx by xxx .

We confirm the following:

Job title (At time of leaving)

Employment Start Date

Employment End Date

Reason for leaving (If known)

Salary (if a Mortgage or Rental)

Comments (Optional)

Please do contact us if you have any queries on X or X

Yours sincerely

HR Operations