



**Haringey** Council

**General Purposes Committee**

**On 12 January 2010**

Report Title. **Recruitment Policy Update**

Report of **Assistant Chief Executive (People & OD)**

Signed :

Contact Officer : Steve Davies, x3172, [steve.davies@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:steve.davies@haringey.gov.uk)

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. To approve the principles of change to the Recruitment policy that will be discussed with the unions and delegate authority to negotiate the changes to the Head of Human Resources.

**2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)**

- 2.1. (Not necessary)

**3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

- 3.1. Part of Haringey Value for Money review of recruitment advertising.

**4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. To delegate authority to the Head of HR to negotiate changes to the Recruitment policy with the trade unions.

## **5. Summary**

- 5.1 The recruitment policy is being updated to incorporate a number of changes to make the recruitment process easier and more cost effective to manage. By pushing more advertising on line the council can save at least £200k per annum, and by pushing more on line applications approx £70k can be saved in response handling costs.
- 5.2 It is proposed to make it easier for managers to access training, and improved safeguarding arrangements have been incorporated in the policy. Requesting one employment reference will reduce the recruitment timescale which will benefit both the applicants wishing to start with the council and managers wanting them to start as soon as possible.

## **6. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

- 6.1. The Chief Financial Officer confirms that directorate budgets have been reduced pro-rata by £200k following the decision to move to on-line advertising. It is expected that the estimated £70k saving from avoiding response handling costs once all applications are made on line, will be achieved as of April 2010 by further reducing directorate budgets pro-rata.

## **7. Head of Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the contents of this report and has no comments to make concerning the proposed changes to the recruitment policy.

## **8. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments**

- 8.1. An equalities impact assessment is currently being undertaken. Information from this will be fed into the review of the policy and the final negotiations.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1. The Head of HR has already met with the trade unions in order to open discussions on changes to the Recruitment policy, and these will continue

## **10. Service Financial Comments**

- 10.1. Recruitment Advertising analysis has been carried out with a view to reducing the spend on advertising by at least £200K per annum across the council. In order to help achieve this Chief Executive Management Board have agreed that from 1 October 2009 advertising campaigns will primarily be on line only, with exceptions subject to Director level approval.
- 10.2. By pushing applications on line the council can save approx £70k per annum in response handling costs.

## **11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

No documents that require to be listed were used in preparation of this report.

## **12. Principles of the Recruitment Policy Update**

### Introduction

Modernising recruitment was identified as part of the recent value for money review. Recruitment is traditionally a resource intensive process, reviewing the process will produce considerable cost savings and will also improve the candidate experience and make it better for managers to use. The aim will be to make the process user friendly, easier & quicker to complete.

The main changes to the policy are outlined below.

### **Policy Principles**

#### **1. Advertising**

1.1 The recruitment process has traditionally been paper based in terms of both advertising and applying. As more organisations move their advertising online, the decline in print advertising is increasing the cost of using print media for recruitment advertising. Therefore it is proposed to push more advertising to online media only and utilise print media more for generic attraction to the Haringey website for jobs. This will include regular adverts in Haringey People. Exceptions to online advertising will need to be signed off by the Director with an appropriate business case.

#### **2. Job Search Vacancy Bulletin**

2.1 The current Job Search bulletin carries the full text of each vacancy along with reply details. The bulletin is produced fortnightly and paper copies are sent to public council offices. The average annual cost of producing the bulletin is £24,000 (average £1,000 per copy for printing and distribution) and is resource intensive in paper and time taken each fortnight to produce it. It is proposed to replace the full bulletin with a shortened jobs listing that will identify the job title, pay and brief 2-3 line job description. This will be produced and distributed to council offices & libraries as it is now, but because it will be a shorter document this will save on printing and environmental costs. A full bulletin will be available on the council's website for applicants.

#### **3. Application Forms**

3.1 The majority of applications are already received online (over 96%) and therefore it is proposed to push more applications to online. Applicants can still request postal applications if they wish and they will still be handed out to potential applicants at job fairs and specific recruitment events for multiple jobs e.g. cleaners, homecarers.

3.2 This proposal will also help to meet the council's objective of becoming greener and more cost effective.

3.3 Paper application forms can still be provided in an alternative format for any disabled candidates who request them.

3.4 The closing date for normal recruitment vacancies will be on Sunday. This will give applicants additional time to complete their form (paper based application forms usually had to be received by Friday). Managers will be able to access applications on Monday morning rather than wait for 48 hours after the closing date for paper applications to be uploaded to the system.

#### **4. Employment References**

4.1 In general, only one employment reference will be required from the candidate's current (or last employer if not currently working). The reference should cover a continuous period of 12 months and a second employment or other reference should be sought to cover this period if necessary. Where employment references are currently sought which cover a 5 year period (i.e. Social Workers), the process will not change.

4.2 Where applicants do not have a current or previous employer (e.g. college or school leavers, those returning to work after a period of time caring for children or relatives, or apprentices) a personal or similar reference can be accepted. For example, this may be either from an employment advisor, from a school or college tutor or from someone who knows the candidate well.

4.3 If the recruiting manager believes that it is prudent to do so, one or more additional references may be sought before a final appointment decision is confirmed.

#### **5. Safeguarding Initiatives**

5.1 Additional safeguarding measures have been introduced in the Directorate of Children & Young People. All short listed candidates complete a Safeguarding Form which is handed to the chair of the interview panel; any items which cause concern are discussed with the candidate who is told that written follow up enquiries will be made with the authority concerned. If the candidate is the preferred candidate, the appointment decision is delayed until further information is received and discussed with the candidate concerned.

5.2 The form asks candidates various details including whether or not they have had any child or children in their household or their care subject to an investigation; or placed on a child protection register or taken into care. It also asks if they have been involved in an adult protection case. The form also seeks confirmation of whether or not the candidate has ever been disqualified from working with children or whether they have been involved in a disciplinary investigation or had an employment contract terminated or been disqualified for any professional body.

5.3 In addition, following the receipt of a reference, the recruiting manager is expected to make verbal contact with the writer to verify their status and relationship to the candidate and to check that the information provided is the information which they gave. Verbal verification also gives the opportunity to clarify any points if necessary. A written note is kept of the conversation and a copy retained on the candidate's personal file.

## **6. Recruitment & Selection Training**

6.1 In house training relating to recruitment and selection is providing by the OD team. As a minimum requirement the Chair of the panel must have received recruitment & selection training from Haringey. This training may take the form of either a Haringey training course; or the Haringey E-recruitment course may be undertaken if the Chair has already received public sector recruitment & selection training elsewhere. A list of trained recruiters will be kept.

## **7. Composition of the Interview Panel**

7.1 Where possible, the panel should be balanced in terms of gender and ethnicity. However, it is recognised that due to the availability of managers that this may not always be achievable. The most important aspect is that the recruitment panel should be committed to and understand the council's equal opportunities policy.

7.2 An interview panel should comprise 3 people where possible, a Chair with the authority to appoint, the line manager for the vacancy and one other. In exceptional circumstances, interviews may go ahead with a Chair and one other but two is the minimum allowable. If one panel member has to withdraw part way through the process (i.e due to illness or unforeseen business emergency), the interviews should proceed with only 2 panel members rather than cause unnecessary delays to the process and inconvenience to candidates by spending time finding a replacement.

## **8. Overseas Applicants.**

8.1 This section of the policy will be updated in line with the recent legislative changes regarding employment of overseas workers and the introduction of the system of employer sponsorship.

8.2 The new legislation requires the employer to sponsor the migrant worker before they enter the UK. Once the sponsorship certificate has been issued by the employer, the migrant worker applies for leave to work in the UK before leaving their own country. A decision is made based on a points system and if a visa is granted the worker will be given leave to enter and work in the UK for a time limited period. Only certain jobs are eligible to be considered under this scheme, e.g professional jobs in shortage areas such as social workers.