



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.]

General Purposes Committee

On 29 March 2010

Report Title. **Recruitment Policy Update**

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

Signed :

Contact Officer : Steve Davies, x3172, steve.davies@haringey.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. To approve the updated Recruitment Policy, copy attached.

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 approve the report. A copy of the full report is attached.

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 moving more

advertising on line the council can save at least £200k per annum, and by requiring more on line applications approx £70k can be saved in response handling costs.

5.2 Requesting one previous employment reference will reduce the recruitment timescale which will benefit both the applicant who is keen to start work with the council and manager who needs the new employee in post quickly.

6. Chief Financial Officer Comments

6.1. Budgets have been reduced across the Council to reflect the impact of moving to on-line advertising. It is expected that the savings generated from reduced response handling costs will be realised in the first part of the 2010/11 financial year.

7. Head of Legal Services Comments

7.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report and the attached proposed policy. The policy proposals complies with relevant legal requirements and duties on the Council concerning the recruitment of staff.

8. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

8.1. There are no fundamental changes to the content of either policy which will have detrimental equality implications for employees.

9. Consultation

9.1. The Head of HR has consulted with trade unions on the policy changes.

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 moving 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

Modernising recruitment was identified as part of the recent value for money review as it is traditionally a resource intensive process. Reviewing the process will produce considerable cost savings; will improve the experience for candidates and managers.

Policy Principles

1. Advertising

To reduce costs and to reduce the time taken for job adverts to appear in the print media, it is proposed to move to advertise on-line and only to use print media for generic attraction to the Haringey website. Generic adverts 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

It is proposed to replace the full vacancy 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 now, but savings will be made on printing and in environmental costs. A full bulletin will be available on the council's website for applicants and will be sent to all redeployees on the council's register.

3. Application Forms

The majority of applications are already received online and it is proposed to restrict applications made to published vacancies to on-line applications only. Applicants can still request postal applications if they are unable to complete an on-line form or require the form in an alternative format due to their disability. Paper application forms will continue to be handed out to potential applicants at job fairs and specific recruitment events.

4. Employment References

In general, only one employment reference will be required from the candidate's current (or last employer if not currently working) to cover a continuous period of 12 months. A second employment or other reference will be sought to cover any shortfall in 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.

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) a personal or similar reference will be accepted. This may be either from an employment advisor, from a school or college tutor or from someone who knows the candidate well.

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

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. Full details are covered in the policy document attached.

6. Recruitment & Selection Training

In house training relating to recruitment and selection is provided 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.

A copy of the full policy document is attached.

THE RECRUITMENT POLICY

APPENDIX A

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

The Council's Recruitment and Selection policy was approved by General Purposes Committee on XXXXX to take immediate effect.

SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

The procedure covers recruitment to all permanent and temporary / fixed term contract staff employed on a Haringey contract. The procedure is not applicable to schools operating under delegated budgets. A separate procedure exists for all appointments to Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts. In general, the Council defines chief officers as direct reports to the Chief Executive and deputy chief officers as direct reports to chief officers.

Applicants who have accepted voluntary redundancy or early retirement have limitations on their right to be re-employed. Only those who were previously employed at PO2 (or equivalent) or below and who left the Council's service at least one year before may be re-employed.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The procedure aims **“to ensure a fast, efficient and transparent process in which both managers and the Recruitment Team are aware of their responsibilities”**.

All recruitment campaigns should be completed as quickly as possible as good candidates may be lost if the process is delayed, delays also give a poor perception of Haringey to applicants and this may affect future applications. The aim is to have an 8 week turnaround from a recruitment request being received by the Recruitment Team to the confirmation of start letter being sent to the applicant. This is an ambitious target which can only be achieved if recruiting managers and the Recruitment Team work closely together.

Recruitment has traditionally been resource intensive in terms of paper and time taken. To reduce costs and to improve the candidate experience, vacancies will be advertised on websites in preference to using paper media and applications will be accepted via the council's jobs website for all posts except where jobs are advertised at jobs fairs or similar events.

The paper version of the Job Search bulletin will show basic vacancy details, the full version of the advert will be available only on line. Paper copies will continue to be circulated to public access points.

Only one employment reference will be requested to cover a continuous period of twelve months. Obtaining references is the longest part of the recruitment process and most are not directly relevant to the post being appointed to, the process is one over which the council has no control and reducing the time taken to obtain one current, relevant reference will decrease the time taken to start a new candidate following their

interview. Exceptions to this will be made when candidates have little or no previous work experience i.e school or college leavers, applicants for Apprenticeship or Graduate training schemes, or from those returning to work after a career break.

The safeguarding aspect of the recruitment process has been strengthened for recruiting to social work and other front line posts in the Directorate of Children & Young People.

Redeployment of Existing Council Staff

All vacancies are considered as potential matches for council redeployees before an external advert is placed. The Redeployment Policy found on Harinet has further details.

ADVERTISING A VACANCY AND INVITING APPLICATIONS

If a vacancy at either the same or a similar level occurs within 6 months of a previous recruitment process it may not be necessary to re-advertise the vacancy in order to fill it. The Notification to Advertise should be completed and submitted in the usual way, the vacancy will be checked to for suitability for a redeployee and if there are none suitable the manager will be notified. If there are second choice candidates from the original recruitment process, they can be contacted to check if they are interested in being considered. If they are, a panel interview can be arranged and a decision taken.

Recruiting Temporary Staff from Agencies into Permanent Posts

All permanent or short term contract vacancies must be advertised. Managers cannot offer a permanent or fixed term contract to an agency temp or to any other non-employed worker without going through the agreed recruitment process.

Recruiting with a Partner Agency

The advertisement must be agreed by both partners and should clearly reflect the partnership nature of the post along with the length of the funding. The advert should appear in the standard house advert style of the employing organisation along with the logo the partner organisation.

The final shortlist of candidates must be agreed by both partners. The Chair of the panel should come from the employing organisation and s/he should arrange for the recruitment administration to be completed.

Recruiting to a Newly Created Post

If managers want to recruit to a new post, the post must be created following the Establishment Control procedure. A copy of the procedure can be found on Harinet.

Drafting the Advertisement

The Recruiting Managers Toolkit on Harinet has information regarding drafting advertisements.

Media Selection

Following a decision taken by Chief Executive's Management Board in 2009, all recruitment advertisements will appear on-line only. The exception to this will be publicising job fairs or similar recruitment events which may benefit from using print media. If all attempts to recruit on-line have failed and the line manager feels that print media should be tried, a business case can be made which should be signed off by the relevant Director.

All recruitment adverts will be placed on the council's website and details will be put into the Job Search bulletin which will be circulated fortnightly to council customer service centres and libraries. The bulletin will list relevant details of the vacancies with the full text of the advert shown on the council's website.

The council's house agreed house style will be the format for all advertisements. Recruitment advertising will be handled by the council's contracted advertising agency.

Format of Application Forms

Applications to individual advertised vacancies will only be accepted if they are made via the council's on-line application system.

The exception to this will be where candidates contact the HR Recruitment Team to either request an application in an alternative format if they have a disability which prevents them from applying on-line or to request a paper application pack if they are unable to access a computer to complete the form.

Paper applications will also be accepted from candidates attending job fairs or a similar event attended by Haringey staff. Providing a paper application to candidates will increase the likelihood of an application being made and the success of the event.

SHORT LISTING APPLICATIONS

The closing date for adverts will be on Sunday, recruiting managers will be able to access the applications received on Monday morning. Short listing should be carried out by at least two members of the interview panel and be completed within 5 working days of the closing date. Managers are responsible for ensuring that a disabled candidate who meets the minimum essential criteria is guaranteed an interview, but appointment to the post must be made on merit.

The **Short listing form** should be used to record all shortlisting decisions made. All papers must be kept by the recruiting manager for at least six months from the date of interview. Once shortlisting has been completed, the details of the candidates to be called to interview should be notified to the Recruitment Team using the **Interview Form**. On receipt of the form, letters inviting the short listed candidates to interview will be prepared and sent by the Recruitment Team.

The invitation letter sent to candidates asks them to contact the recruiting manager if they have any special needs which they need to be met at interview, e.g. sign language interpreter, assistance to allow ease of access for wheelchairs, a reader etc. Advice about how to meet a request is available from the Recruitment Team or from your Equalities Adviser.

If a large volume of applications is received, it is up to the judgement of the shortlisting panel to decide which candidates' best meet the criteria. The panel may choose an objective means of differentiation, for example, weighting certain criteria or some determining some other criteria, to help reduce the application list to a manageable shortlist. Alternatively, the panel may want to consider holding a two stage interview process. If this option is taken, the criteria tested and the questions asked must differ at each interview stage although the interview panel must remain the same.

Appeals against Shortlisting Decisions

A complaint against the decision should be put in writing to the HR Support and Recruitment Manager who will arrange for the Chair of the Panel to contact the applicant to explain the reasons for the decision of the panel.

If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the explanation, she/he must put a second complaint in writing to the HR Support & Recruitment Manager who will arrange to examine the shortlisting papers including all application forms. A decision will then be made about whether or not the initial decision of the panel was correct. If the interviews have not been held, they should be postponed until the investigation into the shortlisting decision has been completed.

If the HR Support & Recruitment Manager finds that the decision not to shortlist was correct, the applicant will be given an explanation in writing. If the decision is found to be wrong, the applicant must be interviewed, either at the same time as other candidates are interviewed or as soon as possible after this date, using the same assessment and interview questions.

INTERVIEW PANEL COMPOSITION AND TRAINING

The ideal size of an interview panel is three people. Wherever possible, the composition of the panel should be balanced in terms of ethnicity and gender, however, it is recognised that this may not always be possible due to the timing of the

recruitment interviews and existing diary commitments of managers and the process should not be unduly delayed because of this.

The panel must comprise:

- A Chair who should be a person with authority to appoint
- the direct line manager of the person to be appointed (if different from the chair)
- and one other person, either someone who has specialist knowledge which the panel would benefit from or someone who will have a working relationship with the new postholder.

As an ideal, all members of the interview panel should have received training in recruitment and selection, either from Haringey or from another public sector organisation. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible due to the timing of interviews and training courses. So 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 the standard 2 day course; or the shorter E-recruitment course.

The panel members should remain the same throughout the process. However, if a panel member has to withdraw due to illness or other exceptional reason, the Chair should make the decision either to substitute him/her if time allows or to continue with only 2 panel members in order to make sure that the recruitment process proceeds smoothly and to timetable.

Panel members cannot be included in the process if they have a social relationship with a candidate. If a panel member realises at the time of shortlisting that s/he knows a candidate they must declare an interest and take no part in the process.

Panel members cannot interview for posts which are at or above their own grade. The exceptions to this are where a member of the HR or Equalities teams is on the panel in their professional capacity or where someone is invited to provide specialist or technical knowledge.

The Chair is responsible for distributing copies of the application forms to each panel member in advance of the interviews and for ensuring that the agreed interview questions have been entered onto the **Interview Notes** form. Each panel member must keep notes for each candidate and these must be kept by the Chair of the panel along with all other recruitment documentation for a minimum of 6 months from the date of the interview.

Selection Exercises and Assessment Tests

The interview letter must contain details of tests or presentations to be carried out as part of the interview process. Selection exercises can be prone to culture and gender

bias and care must be taken in choosing and using them. The most relevant exercises are those which are developed from a key part of the job (e.g. typing tests).

The Recruitment Team must be advised where tests are being used and these should be checked to ensure that they are related to the requirements of the job and that they will measure fairly the candidates' ability against the candidate specification.

Drafting the Interview Questions

The questions must be drafted in advance of the interview, normally by the Chair of the Panel, although each panel member should be asked and contribute to the final questions asked.

Each question should have a benchmark answer indicating key areas that the candidate would be expected to cover as this helps each panel member to assess whether or not the candidate has met the criteria in their answer.

The questions must cover all aspects of the candidate specification and must be open and clear and must not discriminate in any way either in terms of gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation or religion. The same core questions must be asked of all candidates although different questions may be asked to probe and elicit further information from each candidate. Assumptions must be avoided, only the information given by the candidate can be used to assess their suitability for the job.

If a candidate has a disability related to communication, the panel must take this into account and if necessary make adjustments in the method of questioning i.e speaking slower, allowing a longer time for the interview to take into account the time a signer will need to interpret.

Conducting the Interview

Each panel member must assess the candidate's performance against each of the criteria being tested. The criteria must be weighted to reflect their relative importance to the job. Essential and most important criteria should be weighted by a factor of 2. Less important criteria will have a weighting factor of 1. Details of the scoring & weighting system are given on the **Interview Notes** form. To achieve a total score for the criteria the rating score is multiplied by the weighting factor.

The Chair is responsible for keeping all interview notes, along with the shortlisting information for a period of 6 months from the date of the appointment.

Whilst the score provide a good and clear indicator as which is the best candidate it should not be treated as the only method of selection. A discussion must take place at the end of the interviews to assess, which candidate, in the opinion of all panel members and taking into account each candidate's level of previous experience, best meets all the criteria and should therefore be offered the post. A consensus of the

panel should be achieved if possible, however if this is not possible, the Chair makes the final decision.

MAKING AN OFFER OF APPOINTMENT

The Chair of the panel must contact the successful candidate as quickly as possible after the interview to verbally offer the post subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. If a Redeployment Appeal is on-going during the period of the interviews, no offer of employment, either verbal or otherwise, can be made to the successful candidate until the outcome of the appeal is known.

At this stage, the recruiting manager must confirm that the name(s) of the employment referee(s) given by the candidate on his/her application form are appropriate i.e. that the referee named is the current or previous line manager. Only when verbal acceptance has been received should the e-form **Appointment Form** be completed and submitted to Recruitment. The successful candidate's original application form and the interview notes of all panel members must be sent to the Recruitment Officer for inclusion on the candidate's personal file.

Once the preferred candidate has verbally accepted, the Chair must contact the unsuccessful candidates to let them know the outcome. If feedback is requested it should be given. It is advisable to offer verbal feedback at the initial stage and if the candidate remains unhappy with the feedback offered, the formal appeal procedure can be invoked.

Pre-employment Checks

On receipt of the completed **Appointment Form**, the Recruitment Officer will send a provisional offer letter to the successful candidate and will send regret letters to the unsuccessful candidates.

The starting salary offered should be the minimum point of the grade unless the candidate is already earning more already or if it is a hard to recruit post and previous attempts to recruit have failed.

The pre-employment checks carried out by Recruitment Team include the following:

- Safeguarding checks (including CRB and / or ISA),
- Occupational Health clearance,
- Employment references
- Eligibility to work in the UK

Candidates are asked to submit original documents to Recruitment to ensure that adequate checks can be made and only when all checks are completed satisfactorily

can an appointment can be confirmed. If original documents cannot be produced or if employment references are unsatisfactory, the offer of employment must be withdrawn.

Employment References

An employment reference will be sought from the candidate's current or last employer, providing that their employment at that organisation lasted for a continuous period of 12 months. If it is not possible to obtain one employment reference covering this full period, a second reference will be sought (which may be a personal reference if the candidate has little or no previous employment history). Employment references for qualified social work posts will continue to be requested to cover a full 5 year period. 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.

Applicants who 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 those who have been long term unemployed) a personal or similar reference will 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.

Managers must be aware of the limitations of employment references and must ensure that the recruitment process is robust and adequately tests the candidate on their experience and suitability for the job being recruited to. All new starters are subject to a six month probation period and that the correct probation process must be followed after any appointment.

Only one reference from the candidate's current line manager is required for internal candidates.

The HR Recruitment team will send a copy of the reference(s) received to the recruiting manager for approval, which must be given in writing and sent to Recruitment for inclusion in the candidate's personal file.

Asylum & Immigration Act Checks

In order Line with the Asylum & Immigration Act 1997 successful candidates must provide original evidence of their right to work in the UK i.e. current UK passport or other passport showing the relevant immigration stamp giving the right to work, or a UK or Irish long birth certificate.

If the candidate's right to work in the UK cannot be proved beyond doubt the offer must be withdrawn as confirmation of the right to work in the UK is a legal requirement.

Agreeing a Start Date

When all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed, Recruitment will notify the line manager who should contact the candidate to agree a start date, the date should be notified to Recruitment who will be able to issue a final contract and arrange an induction date.

If managers agree a start date or start a candidate before they are notified that all pre-employment checks are satisfactory, the candidate will not be entered onto the payroll until all checks are completed.

Appeals against Selection Decisions

Unsuccessful candidates must first put in writing any complaint about the decision to the Chair of the Panel who must provide a feedback to the candidate within five working days of receiving the written complaint.

If the candidate remains dissatisfied, the complaint will be referred to the HR Support and Recruitment Manager. An investigation will be undertaken but this is on the clear understanding that once a recruitment decision has been made, it cannot be reversed.

If the successful candidate subsequently withdraws before a start date is agreed, the panel must take into account the outcome of the investigation before considering a second appointment decision.

Appointing Overseas Candidates

Before offering a post to an overseas candidate, managers must seek advice from the HR Recruitment team to ensure that the correct procedures regarding employment sponsorship of the candidate are followed.

SAFEGUARDING

Recruitment Process in Directorate of Children & Young People's Service

The recruiting manager will refer all Haringey residents who are short listed for a post working directly with children or young people to the Directorate First Response team. If the candidate is known to the authority, details will be passed, in confidence, to the recruiting manager.

Short listed candidates will be sent a Safeguarding Form with their interview letter and will be asked to hand this to the chair of the panel. The form will be checked at the end of the interview and any answers which cause concern will be discussed with the candidate, who will be told that follow up enquiries will be made with the relevant authority. If the candidate is the preferred candidate, an appointment decision will be postponed until full information is received.

Recruiting managers are responsible for following up employment references which are received. A phone call will be made to the referee to confirm the details provided on the reference.

Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Internal or external candidates moving into a job which requires a CRB Disclosure will be required to apply for a new disclosure unless:

- they are moving to a job which is the same as the one they are moving from, dealing with a similar group of clients and dealing with similar work and have an existing CRB which is either less than 12 months old or is less than 3 months old if they are working with children or vulnerable adults
- and they have no break in service
- and have a previous CRB which included a POVA or POCA check.

In all other cases, the new CRB must be received before the employment can be confirmed. If the CRB check is unsatisfactory, the process which must be followed is outlined in the CRB policy.

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) Check

Checks on candidates applying for jobs which meet the ISA definition of either Regulated or Controlled will become mandatory in November 2010. It will be illegal to employ a candidate in a Regulated post if they are not registered on the ISA database before they begin work. Further details are available from HR and will be available in the updated Safeguarding Policy available in 2010.

RECRUITMENT RELATED EXPENSES

A copy of the interview or relocation expenses form is available from the Recruitment Team.

Forms must be completed by the candidate and returned to the recruiting manager for processing and payment.

