

Draft Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure Draft 3 March 2014

Introduction

The council is committed to delivering excellent services by being an employer of choice and having a workforce that represents the local community. Brent is committed to attracting and retaining a high performing workforce.

Our approach

By attracting, developing and retaining a diverse group of high performing staff, we need to select the best person for the job, using fair and impartial methods; create career development opportunities to retain the best staff; ensure equality is at the heart of everything we do; and ensure that our recruitment methods are flexible enough to respond effectively to the challenges of a rapidly changing organisation.

The use of on-line recruitment and other modern and efficient methods will be optimised to provide suitable access to council jobs.

Policy statement

Policy summary

The council will use a range of methods to ensure that recruitment is flexible, effective and efficient, defining the skills and behaviours that are required to do a good job. All appointments will be made on merit; people will only be selected on criteria related to their ability to meet the requirements of the job description and person specifications.

All relevant current legislation will be adhered to. This policy and procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated. This policy is non-contractual.

Definitions and general information

Employees

This policy and procedure applies to all Brent employees.

Where an internal applicant is subject to a live disciplinary warning this will be taken in consideration by the selection panel.

Recruiting managers

Recruiting managers, as well as the council, have a legal duty to treat all individuals fairly and consistently and not to unlawfully discriminate and to ensure that all recruitment activity fully complies with equal opportunities and data protection legislation.

Recruiting managers must keep records of each stage of the recruitment. This includes notes and decisions made during shortlisting and at interview. One version which presents the panel position is acceptable. Recruitment records must be retained for 6 months and candidates may seek to review recruitment records relating to them.

Recruiting managers must be familiar with the council's recruitment procedures before undertaking recruitment on behalf of the council. It is the expectation that all managers should be trained in recruitment and selection. In Brent recruitment and selection will be part of the Managers Essentials programme. As a minimum at least one panel member must be trained. Where new managers joining Brent are able to demonstrate that they have recruitment and selection experience a short briefing on Brent's recruitment and selection policy will be arranged.

Safe Recruitment

Brent is committed to employing the right people to serve the community and meet the requirements of the law. Certain post holders – especially those coming into contact with children and vulnerable adults – must undergo Disclosure and Barring Service check and other verification. New staff will not be able to commence employment without the relevant checks being in place. All staff will be required to undertake right to work checks on appointment. See DBS policy <http://intranet.brent.gov.uk/myemployment.nsf/pages/LBB-692> References from an external candidate's current line manager must be obtained in all circumstances.

Valuing Diversity

Brent is committed to reflecting the diversity of our local community in the workforce. The council recognises that people from a range of demographic backgrounds have different skills, experiences and potential that will help it to achieve its goals. Recruiting from diverse communities will help improve council services and overall performance by filling skills gaps; introducing new ideas and knowledge; and enhancing Brent's reputation and credibility with diverse communities. The council aims to recruit people who share the same values.

Fairness and equality

The council works to ensure all recruitment and selection practices are consistent and reflect the spirit of fair employment and equality legislation. Recruitment and selection procedures and outcomes are monitored and inform regular performance and equality reviews including adverse impact. Candidates who are unsuccessful at interview stage can request feedback on their performance. Internal candidates who are unsuccessful at shortlisting stage can arrange feedback through their line manager. At all stages of the recruitment and selection process reasonable adjustment for disabled people will be considered.

Involving service users and carers in recruitment

Involving service users in recruitment can be a positive aid to attracting and recruiting quality candidates. This is particularly true for senior posts and front line posts. Service users participation in staff selection can help in appointing candidates who can communicate effectively and sensitively with service users; understand services from the service users' perspective; and provide services that include service users as active partners in the provision of care. When relevant, steps must be taken to involve service users in the selection process wherever possible. The recruitment team can provide further information as required.

Applying the recruitment policy and procedure

Stage 1: Preparation

When a vacancy arises the recruiting manager must in the first instance consider whether there is a requirement to replace the post or whether the work can be undertaken in an adequate way through reconfigurations within the team in order to reduce spend.

Where it is considered appropriate to fill a vacant post the recruiting manager must ensure the job description and person specification is up to date, concise and easy to understand. Applicants use this information to help them decide whether to apply and to help them prepare their application.

The job description and person specification must be based on one of the job family templates and the only additional information should be role specific requirements.

When revising the job description and person specification the following should be taken into account:

- There is no need to list all routine duties, only the main tasks of the job
- Job descriptions should be short, written in plain English and jargon free
- If the post is new, the post will need to be evaluated by a trained evaluator in HR.

Only posts on the council's staffing establishment can be filled. Where a request is made to fill a post over and above the staffing establishment a business case must be made and approved by the relevant Operational Director and HR Director.

It may be possible to cover temporarily vacant roles, for example maternity cover, by a secondment or acting up arrangement. (See the council's pay policy). Where a fixed term contract is appropriate and the recruiting manager should investigate whether the employee is already on an existing fixed term contract

Stage 2: Attracting candidates

It is important to use the right media to attract the best quality candidates and advice can be obtained by the recruitment team. Options include internal advertising; Brent's website; social media sites, JobCentrePlus; Brent's Job Shop; and a diverse range of online job sites.

Brent will use its discretion to decide whether to use internal-only advertising to recruit in conjunction with the HR manager.

Posts at Heads of Service level or above must be advertised externally.

Stage 3: Asking for applications

Applications will generally be made via the council's online recruitment system. Paper copies of forms will be accepted in very limited cases (e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a person with a disability) and can be scanned into the system. A third party, Job Centre Plus or Re-employ advisors can complete applications for people with a literacy or learning disability.

Stage 4: Initial Longlist/Shortlisting

Longlisting/shortlisting can be undertaken as soon as applications are received and as soon after the closing date as possible. Longlisting/shortlisting will be undertaken based on how closely the candidate meets the requirements of the person specification: Where testing is required at longlist stage the outcome of the test will be used to determine who progresses to shortlist stage.

- The interview panel must be involved at the shortlisting stage and one shortlist form completed on behalf of the shortlist panel by the panel chair. Interview panels should be uneven in number and consist of at least three panel members. Panels should be representative in terms of race and sex. Disabled applicants that meet the essential criteria in the person specification will automatically be longlisted/shortlisted. At interview stage disabled people will not be treated more favourably. The panel will always seek to recruit the best person for the role. Wherever possible a panel will meet to agree the shortlist providing arranging the meeting does not delay the process. In the event convening the panel is difficult the agreed list can be determined through telephone conference calls

and by exception email correspondence where a telephone conversation is not possible within the timescales due to other work commitments.

There will be occasions where there are a large number of applicants and excessive numbers of candidates who meet the person specification. In these instances it is advised to either add an additional stage into the recruitment process e.g. test longlisted candidates in order to obtain a shortlist or to raise the bar by determining (as a panel) additional criteria to assist in determining a manageable shortlist. In the case of the latter a file note should be kept of how the shortlisting was undertaken. Where additional criteria (desirable) is used to provide a manageable shortlist disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria will be included on the shortlist.

Stage 5: Selection

Interviews continue to be the main method of selection, but may be supplemented by other selection methods. The aim of all selection methods is to assess whether, and to what extent, a potential candidate meets the requirements for the post.

Selection methods can take place before or following shortlisting, but usually before the final interview. They may also be used when there is a tie between equally experienced or able candidates to help recruiters identify particular strengths or weaknesses as further evidence of their decision. Selection methods can include in tray tests, case studies, scenarios and presentations. It should be noted that some members of the recruitment team can assist in designing tests in-house and have been trained to do so. For posts at Heads of Service level and above there are specific requirements in respect of the selection methods and advice should be sought from the council's HR Director.

A standard set of interview questions must be agreed between panel members before the interview. Interview questions must always include an equalities question and for staff with line management responsibilities a performance management question as well. The same set of core questions should be asked of all interviewees for the same vacancy. However supplementary questions may be asked to clarify an answer. Interview questions will assess the candidates suitability for the post and scoring will be based on the quality of responses to the questions. Expected responses should be agreed by panel members in advance.

The chair of the panel will complete one form on behalf of the panel which all panel members will need to sign in agreement. This will be retained for six months along with one set of notes from the panel. All other records will be destroyed.

Stage 6: Notification and Verification

If more than one candidate is appointable, the panel must decide which candidate best meets the criteria. Other appointable candidates should be placed in rank order in case the candidate declines the job offer. In the rare cases where candidates' results cannot be separated, the panel may need to consider re-interviewing these two candidates. If the same or a broadly comparable vacancy arises within a six month period the panel can go back to the other appointable candidates without a further recruitment process being instigated.

It is important to decide whether candidates are appointable or not.

Candidates should normally be telephoned within a working day of the interview and advised about their success or otherwise. It is best practice to advise candidates at interview about when they will be informed of the outcome. The decision will always be confirmed in writing. The successful candidate will receive a provisional offer subject to satisfactory references, medical clearance and other satisfactory employment verification. The recruitment manager must satisfy themselves that a satisfactory reference has been provided by the candidate's current line manager in all instances.

Stage 7: Giving feedback to candidates

The chair of the interview panel is responsible for arranging feedback on candidates' performance during the selection process, highlighting strengths and areas for development. It is the council's position that feedback will not be provided at longlist/shortlist stage. Feedback will only be given verbally following interview and never put in writing.

In the case of internal applicants it is considered that feedback at shortlisting or selection stage should be provided where an individual raises it with their line manager in a one to one meeting. It is recognised that this is good practice and will assist the individual in their development. It will be the line managers responsibility to obtain feedback information from the recruiting manager and discuss it with them.

Where the selection process has used scenario based exercises and in-trays the learning from these should be incorporated into the individual's performance appraisal and one to one supervision meetings. This will allow both the council and the individual to benefit from the learning and their personal development.

Stage 8: Starting work at Brent

The recruitment and selection cycle is only completed once the appointed member of staff is effectively inducted into the required role. Brent's corporate induction procedure will be implemented for all newly appointed personnel. Local induction systems will also be in place to ensure staff are properly orientated in their new role. Essential training will be undertaken by new staff as required and must be undertaken in order to complete a new member of staff's probation period.

Senior appointments

External recruitment consultants may be commissioned to support the recruitment process for senior appointments (Heads of Service and above). Costs will be charged to the relevant department. Appendix 1 outlines the roles and responsibilities throughout a senior recruitment process.

The HR Director will decide which specialist recruitment consultancies should be approached to tender to provide recruitment support for all senior appointments and will lead on arrangements relating to any Staff Appointment Sub-Committees for Director level posts and above.

References

Two references must be obtained for all new appointments (internal and external) and one reference must be the current line manager (or former line manager if the individual is currently unemployed) for internal candidates the reference must PO6 or above.

References must be obtained in advance of final panel interview for all posts at Heads of Service level or above.

For appointments at Head of Service level the process and panel arrangements outlined in Appendix 1 should be used in all instances regardless of whether a recruitment provider is engaged or not.

Redeployees

For existing staff who are part of the redeployment process, please refer to the council's Managing Change Policy and Procedure. Managers must familiarise themselves with the council's redeployment arrangements to understand the procedure to follow where staff at risk of redundancy apply for vacancies being advertised.

Appendix 1

Engagement of an Executive Search company

Tender Stage

The HR Director, with support from the recruitment team, will carry out the tender process, providing job details and a point of contact. The provider will be briefed on the council's commitment to reflect the diversity of the local community in its workforce. On receipt of submissions the HR Director will analyse proposals and identify the recommended provider. The preferred provider will be approved by the council's Chief Executive in the case of Operational and Strategic Director appointments. For Heads of Service appointments the preferred provider will be agreed with the relevant Operational Director and HR Director. The HR Director will then engage the successful provider.

Briefing Stage

A briefing will take place with the Chief Executive and HR Director or for Heads of Service posts with the Operational Director and HR Director (or designated deputy) and the successful provider. The purpose of this briefing will be to:

- Agree the advertising strategy
- Agree timetable
- Agree scope of search
- Agree assessments to be used

When appointing an Operational or Strategic Director the council's HR Director will liaise with the Members office to identify panel members and make arrangements for all key panel meetings (room bookings, refreshments) and will write to panel members with information about the key stages of the recruitment process. The Chief Executive and HR Director will act as advisers to the panel and in the case of Operational Director posts the relevant Strategic Director will also be in attendance along with the executive recruitment company lead.

For Heads of Service posts, the HR Director will agree the panel arrangements in advance of the briefing with the Chief Executive. The panel will usually consist of the following:

- The recruiting Operational Director (and/or Strategic Director)
- Chief Executive (or CMT member from another part of the business)
- HR Director (or designated deputy)

The panel must be representative in terms of sex and race and uneven in number. The Executive Search company lead may act as an adviser to the panel. It may also be appropriate to have another specialist adviser present.

Advert and Microsite stage

The recruitment provider will:

- Produce advert copy and mock ups (for creative adverts)
- Provide media schedule for external advert costs
- Produce a microsite (or candidate information pack)
- Get approval from the HR Director and recruiting manager (Operational Director or above)

The HR Director will liaise with the consultants and provide information for the microsite or candidate information pack.

Application stage

The recruitment provider will:

- Receive and log all applications
- Sift applications against criteria in person specification
- Provide a grade and sift summary on each application
- Send all applications and sift summary to the HR Director who will in turn distribute applications and sift summaries to panel members ahead of the longlist meeting

It should be noted that longlisting and shortlisting for posts subject to a senior appointments sub committee process the panel will need to be engaged by correspondence following a meeting with the recruitment provider, Chief Executive, HR Director and relevant Strategic Director (if appropriate) on the proposed longlist.

The recruitment provider will present applications at the longlist meeting and agree the longlist with the panel. HR will organise the longlist meeting.

Preliminary Interview and testing stage

Preliminary interviews and scenario based assessments will be conducted by the recruitment provider who will produce a report on each candidate which will be sent to the HR Director to distribute in advance of the shortlist meeting.

Shortlist meeting

The recruitment provider will present reports at the shortlist meeting and agree a (provisional) shortlist with panel (generally no more than 3 candidates).

The HR Director will liaise with the Chair of the Senior Appointments Sub Committee by correspondence on the proposed shortlist and will write to all members of the Senior Appointments Sub Committee. (If the Chair did not concur with the proposed shortlist, a meeting of the Senior Appointments Sub Committee would be convened.

Final Panel stage

The recruitment provider will make arrangements for candidates to attend the final panel and be in attendance at the final panel. The provider will take up telephone references before the final panel and provide suggested questions where required.

The HR Director will ensure packs are distributed to panel members and ensure room arrangements have been made.

Post Appointment stage

The Chief Executive or recruiting director (in case of Heads of Service) will inform the successful candidate and refer them to the HR Director to determine their package arrangements.

The recruitment provider will inform unsuccessful candidates and provide feedback.

In the case of Operational or Strategic Director appointments the HR Director will write to the Executive Members giving 7 days to object to the appointment. HR will be responsible for all employment checks and contractual documentation in the usual way.