



Recruitment & Selection Procedure

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Brent Council is committed to be an employer of choice and have a workforce that represents the local community and that will deliver excellent services. This Recruitment and Selection Procedure aims to help managers attract and retain the right people to work for Brent and increase opportunity for the local community, particularly the groups that are under-represented in the workforce, such as young people.
- 1.2. This document sets out our approach to recruitment. It is based on our aim to create a high-performing, diverse and team-based organisation that has a strong mix of skills, experience, talent and personal qualities.
- 1.3. This procedure sets out the councils arrangements for recruitment and selection of staff. All staff involved in recruitment and selection must adhere to the procedures and guidelines. Failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary action. Please contact the HR Enquiry Service for specific advice on issues arising in recruitment not covered by this procedure
- 1.4. This document supersedes all previous procedures relating to recruitment and selection.

2. So why change the recruitment process?

- 2.1. We need to find ways of encouraging people from all backgrounds and experiences to join Brent Council in order to make the workforce more representative of the community we serve. The previous recruitment practices have not done this. They have tended to favour people who have knowledge of how local government works. Instead, we want to move towards a more open, accessible system where those from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors are equally engaged. We know from research that people aren't necessarily attracted to one sector or another. It is the type and content of the job and the overall employment package that matters to them.
- 2.2. This recruitment process reflects the needs of a rapidly changing organisation, enabling changes in the way we work to be made quickly and minimising impact on existing staff. The procedure supports the use of an online recruitment system that will improve the speed and control of the recruitment process.

3. Equal Opportunities and Data Protection Legislation

- 3.1. Recruiting managers have a legal duty to treat all individuals fairly and consistently. It is incumbent on you not to unlawfully discriminate in breach of the law and to ensure that all recruitment activity fully complies with equal opportunities and data protection legislation.
- 3.2. The equal opportunity legislation covers unlawful discrimination for a wide range of reasons, including age, ethnicity, nationality, religion and belief, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, trade union membership and activity. But you should also be aware that other groups may be included in future. In addition, the law now requires public sector employers to audit all their practices to ensure they do not discriminate unlawfully.
- 3.3. The law applies to you and other individuals, as well as the Council as an organisation. This means that you must keep records of each stage of the recruitment process to show that you and the Council have not discriminated unlawfully. Decisions may have to be checked when we audit our practices for unlawful discrimination. In addition, all candidates now have the legal right to look at the recruitment records relating to them. This includes notes and decisions made during shortlisting and in interviews. The recruitment system will store this information for you but you will be responsible for scanning in interview notes.

4. Stage 1: Preparation

- 4.1. The job description and person specification must be up to date, concise and easy to understand. We send the job description and person specification to potential job applicants. Applicants use this information to help them decide whether to apply and to help them prepare their application.
- 4.2. 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, for example, a Finance Officer with contact with children in schools should be based on the generic Finance Officer job description and person specification with the requirement of having a CRB check added in to the person specification.
- 4.3. Follow these guidelines when you revise job description and person specifications:
 - There is no need to list all routine duties.
 - List the main tasks of the job, thinking about describing what needs to be done. If you simply describe how the current job-holder undertakes the work, you may make the job description too narrow and exclusive.
 - Job descriptions should be short, written in plain English and jargon free, so that all sections of the community can easily understand them – and not just those familiar with local authorities.
 - If the post is a new position, a new job description and person specification will need to be completed and the post evaluated by the job evaluation team.
 - The job description template must be used so that all mandatory clauses are included.
- 4.4. All posts must be approved by the Head of Service or his/her delegated representative before Stage 2. Where it is decided to fill a currently occupied post, ensure that the existing post holder has submitted their resignation in writing and that their last day of service has been mutually agreed. In the case of retirement, mutual agreement should be reached and to the last day of service should be confirmed with the retiring officer before any formal action is taken to recruit.
- 4.5. Temporarily vacant roles, for example a project role or maternity cover, can be covered by either a secondment or acting up arrangement. For example Acting up can be considered where that is a designated deputy to the holder of the vacant post, then that individual may be invited to act-up. This would be dependent upon the line manager's assessment that the deputy is capable of undertaking the duties and responsibilities of the post and the employees own willingness to act up in this way. Alternatively, the line manager may ask the individual to cover only part of the duties and responsibilities of the vacant post and provide payment for the additional work undertaken by way of an honorarium. Such action would be appropriate when it is not considered that the individual is capable of carrying out all the duties or where part of the duties may be left uncovered for a period.

5. Stage 2: Attracting candidates

- It is important to use the right media to attract the right candidates. Posts will be marketed in an appropriate way agreed with the Recruitment Consultant, based on advice given by the Council's media advisors. Much of the historic advertising media provided poor value for money and will only be used if there is a business case.

Examples of future marketing media include:

- Appropriate jobs initially being advertised to internal redeployees. For example employees going through the organisational change process whose jobs may be at risk.
- All posts will be advertised on the Brent website, on the JobsGoPublic.com and associated job boards (including Job Centre Plus)
- Some manual jobs (not requiring literate candidates) will be recruited direct from the Job Centre.
- Specialist job boards will be used for specialist roles
- Some jobs will be advertised in the Job Shop (Brent Magazine supplement) but this will not dictate time scales.
- Social networking and Internet search engines (particularly for young people).

- 5.1. The council will use its discretion to decide when it is appropriate to use internal-only advertising to recruit. For example for internal career development, succession planning and wide scale organisational change. It is important to ensure that the council employs the right people with the necessary skills and competence. The Strategic HR Manager will support managers with identifying the skills and competencies required for particular jobs. The Assistant Director of HR or his/her delegated representative will make a decision on whether internal or external advertising will be appropriate.
- 5.2. Advertising vacant posts internally, has several benefits as it encourages the career development of existing staff; it could potentially reduce the number of staff leaving to seek higher graded posts and it also reduces the time to recruit staff, which avoids costly external press advertising.
- 5.3. Internal-only advertising can also have disadvantages.. Internal only advertising would be inappropriate where it appeared likely that it would involve unlawful discrimination in breach of equalities legislation.
- 5.4. The Assistant Director of HR or his/her delegated representative in consultation with the relevant director is responsible for the approval and decision on whether such advertising would be appropriate.

6. Stage 3: Asking for applications

- 6.1. Applications will generally be made via the Councils online recruitment system. Paper copies of forms will be accepted in very limited cases (e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a person with disabilities) and can be scanned in to the system. Applications can be completed by a third party, Job Centre Plus or Re-employ advisors for people with literacy or learning disability.

- 6.2. Applications can also be made using a Curriculum Vitae (CV). Where CV's are submitted, this should relate to the person specification of the role. An additional supporting statement may or may not be required to address key criteria.

7. Stage 4: Initial Shortlisting

- 7.1. Shortlisting can start to be undertaken as soon as applications are received and as soon after the closing date as possible. A minimum of two selectors from the interview panel must be involved at the short-listing stage, although it is better if all members of the interview panel are involved. Disabled applicants that meet the essential criteria in the person specification will automatically be shortlisted for the selection process.
- 7.2. You should use your recruitment criteria and read the information given by candidates in their application (online application form and supporting statement – which can be in the form of a CV) to seek evidence that the candidate meets your requirements. Your recruitment criteria will be listed in the person specification. The recruitment system will guide you through each criterion and scores should be entered in to the system.
- 7.3. You should take account of all types of experiences from the public, private, community and voluntary sector when making these shortlisting decisions.

8. Stage 5: Selection

- 8.1. Job applicants who consider that they have a disability (physical, mental, health, learning) are asked to provide this information on the application form and will be asked if they require any particular assistance in the selection process to accommodate their disability.
- 8.2. All candidates with disabilities must be considered for appointment and the Council is obliged to make reasonable adjustments and adaptations to accommodate the disability. Premises and equipment can be adapted, in many instances at little or no cost, to suit a person with a disability. For example, a grant can be obtained to provide a person with sight impairment with a personal reader service, and an extensive range of equipment can be loaned for indefinite periods to meet the needs of disabled people. For further advice, contact the Disability Employment Advisor at Wembley Job Centre (Telephone 020 8258 3745).

The Access to Work scheme is administered through local Disability Employment Advisers (DEA). The DEA is part of a team of professional disability specialists known as PACT (Placing, Assessment & Counselling Team).

The DEA can offer specialist help and advice on:

- Recruiting disabled people
- Employing someone for a trial period through the Job Introduction Scheme
- Ways to retain an employee who becomes disabled
- Becoming a disability symbol user
- Offering job opportunities in Supported Placements (SPS)
- Fares to Work Scheme (usually 75% of taxi fares)

- 8.3. Interviews will continue to be the main method of selection, but will be supplemented by other selection methods to test competencies. The aim of all selection methods is to assess whether and to what extent a potential candidate meets the post's person specification.
- 8.4. 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 weakness as further evidence of their decision.

- 8.5. Examples of selection methods that you could use, or arrange to be used, include:
- Written tests, including verbal and numerical reasoning
 - Occupational tests
 - Case studies
 - Presentations
 - Group discussions
 - In-tray exercises
 - Assessment centres
- 8.6. It is very important that the selection methods used are relevant and appropriate for the level of the post and the type of work involved. If they are not, the results will not be relevant and their use may breach equality legislation. The Recruitment Consultant can provide advice on appropriate tests and arrange for them to take place.
- 8.7. Organise the interview panel (minimum of two officers, but preferably three). At least two interviewers must have undergone the Brent Recruitment and Selection Training. Any untrained panel must be briefed on and adhere to this procedure. All panel members should have access to the application and supporting information.
- 8.8. Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure the panel is balanced, for example, a mix of male and female and different ethnic backgrounds. The panel can include non-Brent employees, for example, carers or service users.
- 8.9. A standard set of interview questions must be agreed with the other panel members before the interview. 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.
- 8.10. Ask appropriate follow-up questions if a particular answer is unclear or does not give enough evidence about a particular recruitment criterion. As with all parts of the recruitment procedure, you should be open minded and receptive to considering a wide range of experience from the public, private and voluntary sectors and community-based work, as well as different diversity perspectives.
- 8.11. The panel must complete the scoring form on the recruitment system.

9. Stage 6: Notification and verification

- 9.1. There are several reasons why clear, accurate record-keeping is important to you and the Council. Firstly, evaluation will allow the recruitment to be developed and become more effective. Secondly, equal opportunities legislation requires us to keep records and the data can be used to resolve complaints and monitor how well Brent is meeting equality requirements. Thirdly, all candidates have the legal right to look at the recruitment records relating to them. This includes notes and decisions you make during shortlisting and in interviews.
- 9.2. If more than one candidate is appointable, the panel must then 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 can not be separated, the Panel may need to consider re-interviewing these two candidates on those parts of the person specification.
- 9.3. All of the candidates must be telephoned within a working day of the interview and advised about their success or otherwise. 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 verification.

- 9.4. The People Centre is responsible for managing the on-boarding process and managers can monitor progress using the recruitment system. The on-boarding process includes:
- Managing reference, employee verification and medical approval process.
 - Ensuring that all documentation is completed, including contract of employment.
 - Setting up new starter on payroll and ICT account.
 - Providing ID card.
 - Ensuring enrolment on the mandatory training i.e. – Induction, Health and Safety E-learning and Disability Confidence E-learning.
- 9.5. All documentation including application forms, recording sheets, interview decision sheet and questions asked at interview must be scanned into the recruitment system and will be automatically retained for six months.
- 9.6. References must be taken up for internal and external candidates where applicable. The purpose of obtaining references is to confirm or gain factual information on an applicant's current job, salary, length of service, attendance, disciplinary and sickness records and the extent to which they meet the selection criteria for the job. No irrelevant information should be sought or considered.
- 9.7. Where qualifications are a job requirement, the candidate will need to provide original documents as proof to the People Centre for verification before commencing the new post.

10. Stage 7: Giving feedback to candidates

- 10.1. The recruitment system will provide written feedback and reasons for rejection to all applicants. The Chair of the interview panel is responsible for giving further feedback. The feedback you give could cover the candidate's general performance, including during the interview(s), and you could highlight any strengths and areas for development that were found through the use of exercises or tests – provided that they contributed to decisions made about shortlisting or whom to appoint.
- 10.2. Applicants can only make a complaint against non-shortlisting, selection, if they feel they have been discriminated against or if they feel there has been a breach of procedure.

Applicants should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Chair of the recruitment panel; this applies for both internal and external applicants.

All complaints will be managed and responded to in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. All internal complaints raised through this policy and procedure may not instigate a formal complaint under the FAW procedure unless the subject of the complaint is unrelated to the proceedings.

11. Stage 8: Starting work at Brent

- 11.1. All new employees must attend the corporate induction events and complete the mandatory e-learning modules. The People Centre books all new starters corporate induction once their joining date has been confirmed.
- 11.2. New Managers, both employees new to managing in Brent and experienced managers who have recently joined must also attend Management Induction.
- 11.3. A local induction should always be carried out by the line manager which will include: familiarisation with the workplace and colleagues; local health, safety, fire and first aid

arrangements; job responsibilities; local procedures; dealing with complaints, customer care, and the media. Line managers should also assist new employees with queries about contract terms, pay and other aspects of employment. Please refer to the Induction Checklist for managers which can be found on the Intranet under working for Brent.

- 11.4. You should monitor **and** evaluate all the development provided to new recruits during their probationary period. After that, their development needs should be reviewed as part of your normal day-to-day supervision of staff, and during formal appraisals.