



# Preparing to Recruit

Guidance for Managers

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## Initial Considerations

When a vacancy occurs, a manager should consider how the vacancy will be filled or if it needs to be filled at all. When reviewing the post managers should consider:

*Does the post still exist in its current format?*

*Is there a need to fill the vacancy at this time?*

*Do the workforce requirements continue to meet genuine needs and take account of future organisational change?*

*Have any changes in service/division/team structure affected the post?*

*Have the duties and responsibilities of the post altered significantly and has the job evaluation process been used to establish the grade?*

*What are the budgetary implications of filling the post?*

*Can the duties be reorganised amongst the remaining team?*

There are some other considerations that should be taken into account when deciding to recruit:

### *Temporary employment*

You could look at extending the contract of a current temporary employee to fill a vacancy or advertise for a new temporary post.

### *Secondment*

It might be possible to fill the post by secondment or offering an acting up opportunity within the service/division/team.

### *Employees seeking redeployment*

All vacancies will be considered for redeployment by the recruitment team before open recruitment is considered. An employee seeking redeployment may prove to be a suitable applicant for your vacancy. Appointing in this way will reduce the time spent recruiting and the associated administration.

When preparing to recruit, you may wish to check whether there are any employees currently seeking redeployment who would potentially match your vacancy.

### *Use of previous “reserve candidates”*

If the post was filled recently there may still be suitable applicants who have been through the recruitment process that you could approach. You can return to the pool of candidates within 6 months following a recruitment exercise. Please contact the recruitment team for advice on how to go about this.

### *Agency workers*

The use of agency workers should be a position of last resort to cover as “ad hoc occasional use” for staff shortages. It must never be used as an ongoing staffing solution.

After all options have been considered and the decision is made that the post should be advertised and recruited then the next step is to complete the advertising request form. The form can be found on [MyNL](#) and should be sent to the HR Business Partner once completed by the recruiting manager.

In addition to completing the advert request form, the following steps must be completed:

- Review/develop the job advert, job description and employee specification
- Where appropriate, submit the recruitment paperwork for job evaluation
- Identify the recruitment panel

### *Job Description*

The first step in successful recruitment and selection is writing an accurate job description and employee specification. The job description is used to describe the job to potential applicants, allowing them to determine if they are able to fulfil the duties of the post.

Before a vacancy is advertised, the Chair of the recruitment panel must liaise with the HR Business Partner team to ensure that the job description is accurate and up to date.

### *Format of the Job Description*

It should contain:

An accurate job title and the grade of the post, reflecting the establishment.

To whom the postholder is responsible and the Service in which the post is based.

The main tasks of the job (not an exhaustive list of everything the person might be expected to do). These are the key duties and responsibilities to be performed by the post holder.

The outline of the job. This is a short statement, usually no more than one or two sentences, which states the objectives of the job.

The job description should be as clear and concise as possible. Difficult tasks should not be left out if they are part of the job as this could mislead the applicant. Anyone reading the job description should therefore get a clear idea of what key tasks the post holder is expected to do.

### *Who needs the Job Description?*

**The Chair of the recruitment panel and the HR Business Partner team** - as a working tool to draw up the employee specification, advertisement and to decide how to assess candidates.

**The recruitment team** - the job description must be uploaded electronically with employee specification and the online advertisement.

**The applicant** can view the combined Job Description and Employee Specification document on the recruitment portal. You should be aware of your own Service's procedures for maintaining job descriptions and adhere to these.

Specifically, when reviewing a job description you should consider how any changes you might propose would affect other posts within the section or Service. The job

description must clearly link with the job evaluation overview document. Any changes should be reviewed and approved by the HR Business Partner team.

The job description outlines the duties and responsibilities of the post but not the skills, knowledge and abilities the post holder requires. It is only as good as it is accurate.

## **Employee Specification**

A well written employee specification will detail the attributes a person will need to have to be successful in the job and should minimise subjectivity during the recruitment and selection process. The employee specification is crucial to the success of the recruitment exercise and in avoiding subconscious bias.

The requirements listed in the employee specification should form part of the advert. It is used to help selection of the best applicants for interview, develop questions for face to face interviews and decide on appropriate selection methods.

The employee specification defines the essential and desirable criteria required in the following areas: qualifications/training, work experience, knowledge/skills/abilities, personal qualities/attributes.

It is important to ensure that the criteria listed in the employee specification are objective and based solely on the knowledge, skills and competencies that demonstrate the experience required to perform the role competently. It is also important to remember that the criteria specified within the employee specification will be used to assess candidates and therefore requires to be objectively measured.

You should be mindful of ensuring that disabled applicants have the same access, so far as is reasonable in doing a job as a non-disabled applicant.

It is important to ensure that all members of the recruitment panel understand the content of the employee specification. As an absolute minimum, the Chair should draw up the employee specification and ensure that all members of the panel understand the criteria in it.

*Who sees it?*

**The candidate** can access the combined Job Description and Employee Specification document along with the advert on the recruitment portal.

**The panel** - it is the panel's working tool, for advertising, shortlisting and interviewing candidates.

**The recruitment team** - the employee specification must be uploaded electronically with job description and the advert otherwise the job will not be advertised.

### *What are minimum requirements?*

All criteria contained in the employee specification must be strictly relevant to the job and link directly to the job evaluation overview document. The employee specification has criteria which are 'essential' or 'desirable'. It is important not to class as "essential" skills or qualities which can be acquired through development. If there are too many essential criteria then less people will meet them. Equally, if there are too few essential criteria there may be too many applicants.

The criteria listed on an employee specification must be measurable either from the application form or through assessment at interview. Vague statements such as 'good attitude toward the public' or 'good standard of education' must be avoided.

In reviewing or developing an employee specification, it is important to ensure that its contents do not discriminate against broader sections of potential applicants.

Restrictive requirements are not only contrary to the Council's [Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy](#), they may also be discriminatory and therefore unlawful.

#### *(a) Requirements which discriminate against disabled people*

The possibility for overemphasising the need for a particular skill can discriminate against disabled people. For example, a physical disability does not necessarily mean that the person cannot be considered for a job which requires manual dexterity. It is also important to consider reasonable adjustments and special aids and grants which are available to help a disabled person to do a job.

#### *(b) Failing to allow for applicants potential*

It is important to be very careful not to specify (as essential) previous knowledge which only someone already in the Council could have, but which someone from outside could in fact learn very quickly. If it is possible for someone to acquire certain skills with induction or on-the-job training, then it is unnecessarily restrictive to specify these skills as minimum requirements.

Where a post is deemed to require an essential factor or protected characteristic which could exclude some applicants, this will only occur when that factor/protected characteristic can be objectively justified as an occupational requirement and is supported by job evaluation criteria.

## **The Recruitment Panel**

### *Role of the Panel*

Being on a selection panel involves far more than just turning up to conduct interviews. As soon as a vacancy arises and at various stages throughout the recruitment process, a panel should be convened to:

Review the job description and the employee specification

Decide what should be included in the advertisement

Decide how to assess each item on the employee specification

Decide what information should be sent to applicants

After the closing date, the panel are responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

Shortlist	Plan the interviews	Conduct the interviews
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### *Chair of the Panel*

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to ensure that the recruitment process is planned and conducted properly. Please see section 14 of the Recruitment Policy for more details on the role of the Chair.

### *Composition of Panel*

There should be a minimum of two people on the interview panel and the majority of panel members should have undergone recruitment and selection training. The Chair of the recruitment panel must have undertaken recruitment and selection training. Due consideration should be given to the composition of the interview panel to ensure, where possible, a gender balance and to ensure that all aspects of personnel, technical and/or specialist functions are covered.

### *Declaring an interest*

Where a member of a recruitment panel has a personal relationship with a candidate e.g. family relationship or friendship, they will not be permitted to take part in the selection process. Any panel member who feels that their knowledge of a candidate would seriously compromise their objectivity should withdraw from the selection process. It is the responsibility of the panel member to declare this interest. Failure to do so and to continue to participate in the recruitment process will be deemed a breach of policy and the employee may be subject to disciplinary action under the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

If an internal candidate is applying for a post, and the candidate's line manager is participating in the recruitment process, this is deemed to be a professional relationship and can continue.

If you need further support, please call the ESC People Helpdesk on 01698 403151 or email [ESC-Helpdeskteam@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:ESC-Helpdeskteam@northlan.gov.uk)