Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Recruitment & Selection Policy

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Version Control

This document is intended for:

☒ Council staff only ☐ School-based staff only ☐ Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Feb 2024	Policy is now applicable for senior officers; Secondment, Market Supplement and Ex-Offenders policies incorporated; definition of workers added; pre-employment checks amended	Council on 25/1/24

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The Council recognises that its employees are crucial in delivering the highest standards of service and achieving its priorities as an organisation. The Council also understands the need to attract the best talent and ensure that fair and effective recruitment and selection procedures are adopted, complying with relevant employment legislation. This will ensure that the Council recruits and retains the right people with the necessary skills, attributes, and commitment to deliver high quality services to the community.

1.2 It is essential that the approach to recruitment and selection responds to an increasingly competitive market and fits with the overall needs of the organisation, through a carefully planned and systematic approach to workforce planning, alongside consideration of service delivery, and new ways of working which could prove more effective.

1.3 The aims of this policy are, but not limited to:

- Attracting and retaining talented individuals with the appropriate skills, experience and competencies;
- Promoting the Council as an Employer of Choice, and showcasing the organisational brand and values; ensuring all candidates have a positive experience;
- Supporting the achievement of the Council's Workforce Strategy;
- Safer recruitment being central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;
- Recruiting openly, ensuring opportunities are available to all and to attract from a diverse pool of talent;
- Making selection decisions which are non-discriminatory and based on objective and justifiable criteria that are impartial and applied consistently;
- Demonstrating commitment to the responsibilities within the Public Sector Equality Duty, as highlighted within the Equality Act 2010;
- Appointing in accordance with Welsh language guidance;
- Ensuring an efficient and cost-effective recruitment and selection process;
- Understanding why employees are leaving the Council and aim to address the issues by informing strategies to reduce turnover and improve employee retention.

1.4 The Council is committed to being an Employer of Choice, and operates the following schemes in respect of recruitment:

- Disability Confident – under this scheme, where candidates with a disability, defined under the Equalities Act 2010, meet the essential criteria for a job the Council guarantees an interview.

- Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - under this scheme, the Council guarantees an interview to the Armed Forces Community (those currently serving, have previously served, reservists and their partner/spouse) if they meet the essential requirements for the job.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy is applicable to all recruitment and selection except where precluded for valid operational reasons, such as organisational restructuring, redeployment, relief appointments, or apprenticeships with the Council.

2.2 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all permanent, temporary and fixed term employees of the Council with the exception of school-based employees under the delegated powers of the Governing Body who are subject to a separate policy.

2.3 During times of national or 'Gold command' emergency situations, or any other significant local event the Corporate Leadership Team may seek to suspend aspects of this policy in order to appropriately respond to a critical situation.

3. Legislation and Equality

3.1 This policy has been developed in line with employment and equalities legislation and will be reviewed periodically in line with changes in legislation.

3.2 The Council cares about building a more representative and inclusive workplace, and that begins with our recruitment and selection process. In order to deliver the best service possible, diversity of perspectives and experiences, and a fair recruitment and selection process free from bias, is the first step in getting there. On this basis, the Council does not discriminate on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities; or any other reasons which cannot be justified.

3.3 This Policy provides a clear framework within which all Council employees, managers and trade unions can work to achieve equality of opportunity, with particular regard to the protected characteristics outlined in legislation.

3.4 Reasonable adjustments will be made for candidates who indicate they require adjustments through the recruitment and selection process.

3.5 The Council welcomes applications from across the community and is committed to increase applications from those groups who are under-represented in particular areas of work, in line with the principles of "Positive Action", outlined within the Equality Act 2010. This should be discussed with Organisational Development prior to an offer of employment being made.

3.6 The Council will only specify gender or race as a genuine occupational qualification for a position where absolutely necessary and where lawful under the Equality Act 2010. Where a manager decides that a position should have a Genuine Occupational Qualification they will be required to present detailed information that supports their decision.

3.7 Employees involved in the recruitment process have a responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant data protection legislation. This legislation regulates the use of personal data and covers some manual records as well as electronic records and is concerned with the processing of personal data. Under this legislation individuals have certain rights relating to personal data about them during the recruitment process.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Council is a large, diverse employer; and therefore, the recruitment and selection of employees will be the responsibility of individuals across the organisation to ensure maximum effectiveness of the process and decision-making.

- Senior appointments, to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions, are subject to separate arrangements as detailed in the Council's Constitution. Whilst there are separate arrangements in place the recruitment to these posts will normally reflect the principles detailed in this Policy.

- Chief Officers have delegated authority to appoint to all other positions within their approved structure. They may delegate such authority to managers and must ensure that those involved in the recruitment and selection process comply with the provisions of this Policy. Employees who lead recruitment processes (otherwise referred to as 'recruiting managers') will hold responsibility for ensuring that recruitment processes are undertaken in line with this Policy.

4.2 Where the authority to appoint is delegated to officers it is recommended that the recruitment and selection panel will comprise of three officers. Wherever possible panels will reflect the diversity of the workforce and to ensure consistency the same officers will normally be involved throughout the process. In circumstances where there is a need to involve more than three officers or external partners on a recruitment and selection panel then this should be discussed in advance with Organisational Development. A representative from Organisational Development will participate in the appointment process for positions graded 10 and above. Involvement below this level will be in exceptional circumstances only and where required, this support should be requested at the outset of the recruitment and selection process.

4.3 Occasionally, it may be appropriate to run recruitment days or use Executive Search as a method of identifying suitable candidates. This should be discussed with Organisational Development.

4.4 Organisational Development will provide advice and guidance throughout the recruitment and selection process and the Head of Organisational Development or their representative can intervene at any point in the process where non-compliance has occurred or is likely to occur.

4.5 Operating outside of this Policy may leave the Council vulnerable to challenge and as such all employees involved in the recruitment and selection process should be made aware of their responsibilities and undertake appropriate training to ensure the effective application of the Policy. Failure to comply with this Policy, may lead to action under the Councils' Disciplinary Policy.

5. Code of Conduct

5.1 Appointments must be made on merit and in line with the Council's Code of Conduct (Section 27 – Appointments and Other Employment Decisions). In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, members of the recruitment and selection panel should not be involved in any stage of an appointment if they are related to a candidate or have a close personal relationship with a candidate outside work.

5.2 Line management of an employee by a relative is to be avoided wherever possible, in line with the Council's Code of Conduct (Section 26.7 – Line Management of Relatives), to avoid conflicts of interest or allegations of nepotism or favouritism. In a situation where a manager may be required to manage a relative, efforts will be made to relocate one of the parties.

6. Safeguarding

6.1 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that everyone living within the County Borough is safe and protected and that the statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk are effectively met. Safeguarding children and adults from abuse is everyone's responsibility, both corporately and individually, to ensure that all children and adults are treated with respect and protected from others who may abuse them.

6.2 Safer recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. This Policy sets out robust recruitment and selection processes to deter, identify and prevent individuals who might abuse children and/or adults or are otherwise unsuitable for employment.

Recruiting managers need to ensure safer practice in recruitment by giving consideration to safeguarding arrangements at every step of the process which includes:

- Information provided to candidates on safeguarding responsibilities and the requirement for the successful candidate to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements where appropriate.

- Application forms scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; the information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies or any gaps in employment history.

- The selection process assesses and explores a candidate's suitability to work with children/young people/adults at risk.

- Any appointment being conditional on a series of pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed.

7. Assessing the need to recruit

7.1 A vacancy can arise for a number of reasons, such as employee turnover, restructuring, or internal promotion. Where vacancies arise as a result of employee turnover, managers should read the leavers guidance in Appendix 1.

7.2 When a vacancy arises, there may be a need to review the position and / or structure considering both the current and future service needs ensuring that any recruitment is consistent with the workforce plan for the directorate.

7.3 Where there are significant changes to an existing position, or the required qualifications/experience, this must be subject to job evaluation to determine the appropriate grade prior to advertising. Where a job evaluation has already determined a grade for a position, a vacancy must be advertised using the job description/person specification that was submitted as part of the evaluation process. This is to ensure that the Council maintains the integrity of the evaluated grading structure.

7.4 If there are any changes to a directorate structure, or creation of a new position this must be the subject of an approved restructure report.

7.5 The Principles & Approval Process – Recruitment, Contractual & Structural Reviews is available on the intranet and should be followed to initiate recruitment. These processes are subject to review and amendment in accordance with Council operational priorities.

8. Restructuring

8.1 There may be occasions where, due to organisational needs, there will be a requirement to operate outside of this Policy, such as occasions where there is a restructure. Before operating outside of this Policy advice must be sought from Organisational Development.

8.2 Redeployment

- When a vacancy first arises, consideration must be given to the suitability of the position for any employees who are identified as 'at risk' and on the redeployment list. Further details can be found in the Redeployment Policy.

8.3 Direct Appointment/Ring-fencing

- Direct appointments are where appointments are made without subjecting it to competition and therefore, there must be valid reasons for doing so to avoid any accusations of unequal opportunity.

- The only circumstance in which managers may directly appoint are those circumstances where following a restructure an employee's position will no longer exist or will substantially change and they may potentially become redundant or if they require redeployment for health reasons. Employees cannot be directly appointed to positions above their substantive grade, and in these circumstances a recruitment process must take place.

- Where restructuring takes place and there are a number of employees who meet the person specification, the available position will be ring-fenced, and where there is more than one suitable candidate, normal recruitment and selection procedures will take place. In the case of redundancies, please refer to the Redundancy Policy.

- In all cases of direct appointments or ring-fencing there must be prior consultation with Organisational Development and the Trade Unions, which will then be followed by consultation with the employee(s).

- Temporary employees covering a permanent position will not normally be directly appointed. The filling of that position will normally be subject to open competition via this Policy.

9. Recruitment and Selection Paperwork

9.1 Recruitment and selection paperwork is crucial in a successful recruitment and selection process, as it provides the first impression of the position, directorate, and the Council to potential candidates. Recruitment provides a fantastic marketing opportunity to promote the Council as a great place to work. All recruitment and selection paperwork should be of high-quality and in line with the standardised templates which are available on the intranet.

9.2 Job Advert

- The job advert is the first opportunity to sell the Council brand and attract potential candidates to apply for a position. Adverts should follow the standard template available on the intranet; and be concise and attractive.

- All vacancies will be advertised both internally and externally concurrently. This will allow permanent employees to apply for alternative opportunities; temporary, fixed term, and relief employees to apply for permanent positions whilst advertising to a wider, more diverse talent pool external to the Council. Where there is a clear business case a decision may be taken to advertise a vacancy internally only, and in these cases, advice must be sought from Organisational Development. Internal recruitment will be applicable to all those currently engaged via a contract of employment with the Council.

- Vacancies will be advertised weekly on the Council's recruitment bulletin, website and social media, and managers may choose to use a variety of websites or publications. Open adverts will normally be advertised for a minimum of 10 working days.

- The costs for advertising will be funded by the service placing the advert. Cost effective online advertising is strongly encouraged.

- If there is a requirement to extend the closing date for any reason, the recruiting manager should discuss this with Organisational Development.

9.3 Job Description

- The job description is a crucial part of the recruitment process, and its purpose is to provide an accurate account of the main duties, responsibilities, and any special conditions applicable to the position. The job description should be clear, concise and non-discriminatory and contain the information outlined within the template job description available on the intranet.

- Certain positions in the Council are identified as politically restricted as outlined in legislation. Details of any restrictions must be outlined on the job description, as any successful candidate to a politically restricted position must comply with any restrictions during the course of their employment. Further details are available in the Council's Guide to Politically Restricted Positions.

- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. The job description should clearly state if a DBS is required for a position and the level required. In addition, the job advert will usually contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the candidate being offered the position.

- In line with our Agile Working Policy, all positions with the Council are designated as either; agile worker, home worker or service-based worker. The job description should clearly state the designation of the position, which must be in line with the approved designation. For newly created positions, careful consideration should be given to the requirements of the position, before selecting a designation.

9.4 Person Specification

- The person specification forms part of the job description and is an essential tool in the process of selection, ensuring that there is clear agreed information on the relevant criteria against which a candidate's suitability for the position can be assessed. This will ensure that the recruitment and selection process is transparent, fair and effective.

- The requirements within the person specification should be derived from the job description, the Council's Competency Framework and align to those set out in the job evaluation of the position. It should list the skills and abilities, knowledge, experience, qualifications, competencies, professional registration and personal attributes required. Where qualifications are required any acceptable equivalents or alternatives should be stated. Information on the Council's Competency Framework is available on the intranet.

- When advertising a position, a decision should be taken on the most appropriate methods of selection. There are a number of methods to assess a candidate's suitability for a position, including interviewing, selection tests, and assessment centres. It is important to identify the best ways of assessing potential employees and the selection methods are vital to ensure that a candidate holds a particular skill or knowledge level. It should be clear in the person specification what methods of selection will be used during the recruitment and selection process.

- During the course of the recruitment and selection process, consideration should be given to Welsh language guidance. The Welsh language requirements of the position must be clearly indicated in the person specification.

- The person specification must describe the person sought for the job in terms of essential and desirable qualities. The essential criteria must be justifiable, measurable and essential for the effective performance of the job and the desirable criteria will enable a person to perform more effectively.

- The person specification should be clear, concise and non-discriminatory. It should not create any barriers for potential candidates as a result of any protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010.

9.5 Recruitment Authorisation

- In order to initiate the advertising process, it is the recruiting managers responsibility to obtain authorisation to recruit. Once the authorisation has been sought, the Recruitment Authorisation Proforma should be forwarded to Organisational Development along with the following organisational branded documents, including Welsh translations:

    - Job Description and Person Specification
    - Advert
    - Recruitment pack (where required)
    - Report / Recruitment Authorisation Proforma

9.6 Applications

- The Council operates an on-line recruitment system and all vacancies will be advertised on the Council's website. Candidates should apply for the relevant position online by completing the Council's application form. Curriculum Vitae's will not normally be accepted. However, if candidates covered by the Equality Act 2010 experience difficulties applying online, they are able to request an alternative format from Organisational Development.

- Application forms must be submitted by the specified closing date and will be acknowledged via email. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances agreed by the recruiting manager in conjunction with Organisational Development. No late applications will be considered once the shortlisting process has commenced and no application forms will be issued after the closing date.

10. Longlisting/Shortlisting

10.1 Following the closing date, the longlisting/shortlisting of candidates should take place in a timely manner and all members of the recruitment and selection panel should be involved.

10.2 In relation to senior appointments to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions the shortlisting will be undertaken in line with Council's Constitution.

10.3 Where no applications have been received, a decision should be taken on whether or not to re-advertise or re-visit the job design and/or structure.

10.4 In the unlikely event that a decision is taken to delay an appointment the recruiting manager will be responsible for informing candidates, via email if possible, of the situation as soon as possible after the decision has been taken.

10.5 Shortlisting should be determined by considering the information within a candidate's application form, against the requirements of the position as detailed within the person specification. The criteria will be applied equally and consistently to all candidates and no additional criteria may be introduced at the shortlisting stage, nor can the original criteria be applied at a more advanced or exacting level. Only those who meet the criteria within the person specification should be shortlisted.

10.6 Where high volumes of candidates meet the essential criteria for a vacancy, the desirable criteria should be used to assess the long list of candidate's suitability for the position, and a short list of candidates should be selected to move forward in the process.

10.7 The recruiting manager will be responsible for completing the Shortlisting Assessment Proforma, which provides a record of the assessment of candidates and must be returned to Organisational Development to be kept on the recruitment file.

10.8 When shortlisting, managers should follow the principles of the Guaranteed Interview Schemes, as outlined in the policy statement, and candidates who fall within the eligible categories should be offered an interview if they meet the essential criteria of the advert, even where shortlisting comes down to the desirable criteria. These schemes do not guarantee a job offer, and the appointment must come down to the candidate(s) that is most suited for the position.

10.9 No appointments must be made direct at this stage in the process. All appointments must be confirmed following an interview/selection process, even in the situation where there is only one shortlisted candidate.

11. Selection

11.1 The main objective of the selection process is to obtain as much relevant information about each short-listed candidate as possible in order that the panel may make an objective and informed decision in terms of which candidate is the most suitable for the position. There is flexibility in which assessments can be used to assess candidates.

11.2 The recruiting manager will be responsible for the selection process. A member of Organisational Development will only be involved if additional support or coaching is requested or considered necessary in discussion with the manager, or for positions graded 10 and above.

11.3 Panel members should not take part in the recruitment and selection process, if they are related to, or a close friend of a candidate. Panel members should not normally take part in the recruitment process if they have agreed to act as a referee for a candidate except where the appointment may be internal and the situation cannot be avoided. In this situation the referee must inform the other members of the panel before the process begins.

11.4 Candidates who have been successful at shortlisting and invited to the next stage of the recruitment and selection process, will be formally notified by email, using the approved templates in the online recruitment system.

11.5 In relation to senior appointments to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions the selection and appointment will be undertaken in line with Council's Constitution.

11.6 Shortlisted candidates should be given as much notice as possible of the dates of the selection process.

11.7 Unsuccessful candidates will be formally notified via email.

11.8 It is advised, where the successful candidate is required to work with children and/or vulnerable adults that all shortlisted candidates visit the establishment/service area. This will be the responsibility of the recruiting manager to co-ordinate. It may prove valuable in offering an additional opportunity to assess the candidate's interaction with possible colleagues and/or clients. If this method is to be utilised as part of the selection process candidates must be informed.

11.9 It is recommended that a reserve candidate(s) is selected, and this should be the next appointable candidate ensuring that a safe appointment is made.

11.10 All results will be properly documented and recorded against each candidate. Feedback in relation to a candidate's participation during the recruitment and selection process will be available upon request from the recruiting manager.

11.11 Organisational Development can request to defer an appointment being made pending consultation with the Head of Organisational Development or their representative where they are not satisfied that standards have been met.

11.12 Interviews

- It is vital that interviews are carried out in a systematic, objective and professional manner to ensure that the most suitable candidate is selected.

- Each candidate should receive a consistent experience during the interview process, and all candidates should be treated fairly.

- Prior to the commencement of an interview, panel members should agree interview questions which focus on the requirements of the role, care should be taken to avoid questions, which could be interpreted as being discriminatory. Whilst the same core questions should be asked of all candidates, the process should also be tailored to individual candidates as necessary and supplementary questions may be asked as a means of assessing each candidate's individual skills, experience and suitability for the post.

- Following the completion of the interview, panel members must separately consider the candidate's responses provided during the interview and recorded on the Interview Record and Assessment Proforma and make an assessment of the candidates performance.

- The overall assessment of candidates should normally wait until after all the interviews have been conducted. At which stage each candidate will be assessed, and all panel members will discuss the individual scores they have awarded each candidate for each question and the evidence this is based on and arrive at a consensus and agree a score for each question.

- The agreed score for each candidate must be recorded on the Interview Candidate Assessment Proforma by the recruiting manager and the individual marks added up to give the total score for each candidate's responses at the interview. This provides an objective system for determining who should be appointed, which is usually the candidate with the highest overall total score.

11.13 Selection Tests

- Selection tests can provide objective information about a candidate, and the choice of selection tests should be matched to the criteria identified within the person specification. The content of the tests must assist the objective assessment of candidates against the person specification and should specifically relate to the position and should measure an individual's suitability to do the work. The selection method chosen must be appropriate to the level and type of position. Selection tests could include the following, but this is not an exhaustive list, and Organisational Development can advise on the use of tests:

    - Scenario/Case Study
    - Written exercises
    - Preparing a report/press release
    - Analysis of data/data entry
    - Driving Test
    - Manual Handling/COSHH exercise

- It is important that any selection test does not have a disproportionate impact on any candidates who have protected characteristics. Therefore, it is essential that all tests should be reviewed to ensure they are relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias.

- Following the completion of any selection tests, panel members must score the candidate's performance.

11.14 Presentations

- For some positions, the use of a presentation can provide critical information as part of the recruitment and selection process, particularly where this skill will be required.

- Presentations allow the panel to assess the candidate on their knowledge, skills, values and understanding of the particular position/area of work for which they are applying.

- This process needs to be as open and transparent as the interview process, and all results will be documented, and recorded as part of the selection stage.

- Where recruiting managers are considering the use of a presentation, this should be clearly outlined to the candidates who are selected for the next stage of the process, and they should be provided with sufficient time to prepare for the presentation.

- Each member of the recruitment and selection panel must score the candidate's performance.

11.15 Assessment Centres

- An assessment centre is a structured event that includes a mixture of selection tests, presentations and interview methods, usually taking place over one or two days. They are an effective means of identifying candidate behaviours, and suitability for the position. It allows the recruitment and selection panel to assess whether candidates hold particular skills, knowledge and values.

- This method of selection is not suitable for all positions within the Council however, for the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions recruitment usually involves an assessment centre. The use of an assessment centre does allow the opportunity to reduce the number of candidates that progress forward to the final stage of the process. An assessment centre may be facilitated internally by the recruitment and selection panel, or by an external provider.

- It is important that assessment centres do not have a disproportionate impact on any candidates who have protected characteristics. Therefore, it is essential that all methods of assessment should be reviewed to ensure they are relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, and reasonable adjustments should be made if required.

- During the assessment centre the candidate's performance must be assessed.

12. Informing candidates of the outcome

12.1 The recruiting manager will make all verbal conditional offers of employment within a reasonable timeframe of the completion of the selection process. Such offers are legally binding and subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the formal offer letter that will follow. The salary offered will be in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy and graded structure.

12.2 Organisational Development will send out the formal offer letter and relevant documentation after receiving the completed Interview Candidate Assessment Proforma.

12.3 Unsuccessful candidates will normally be advised of the outcome of the selection process by e-mail. Where unsuccessful candidates request feedback, the recruiting manager should offer specific and constructive feedback.

12.4 If a decision to appoint is delayed for whatever reason the candidates must be advised accordingly.

12.5 The recruiting manager is responsible for completing the relevant payroll processes to commence the employee.

13. Pre-Employment Checks

13.1 All new and existing employees who have been appointed to a position will be subject to pre-employment checks. Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the Council being satisfied as to the satisfactory completion of the checks.

13.2 It is essential to safeguard all concerned and ensure that all pre-employment checks are completed **prior to** an individual commencing employment with the Council.

13.3 Where any issues arise as part of the pre-employment process, these will need to be discussed between the recruiting manager, Organisational Development; and where appropriate, the candidate.

13.4 References

- All appointments will be subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory written references. The two references should be from the candidate's last two employers, one of which should be from their current employer. Where an appointment is made internally, a reference will be sought from the candidate's current manager. Where candidates have no previous employers they should nominate individuals that can provide a character reference such as a schoolteacher, college tutor etc. Personal references from a relative, close friend or a Council Member will not be acceptable. The Council reserves the right to contact any previous employer of the candidate in order to verify their employment history.

- References will only be requested for the successful candidate(s), using a standard template.

- References should be used to check important factual information. Where there is a significant issue highlighted within the reference this should be discussed with Organisational Development.

- All information supplied by referees must be treated in confidence and must only be shared with those relevant to the recruitment process, such as the recruiting manager and Organisational Development.

- If an organisation will not provide a reference or has gone out of business then the candidate should provide an alternative referee.

13.5 Right to Work in the U.K.

- The Council is legally required to ensure that all employees have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in line with relevant legislation. As part of the pre-employment checks, all potential employees are required to provide evidence to demonstrate their eligibility to legally work in the U.K.

- All documentation must be sent to Organisational Development to be retained on the employee's file. All right to work checks, will be conducted in line with the latest Government guidelines.

13.6 Disclosure and Barring Checks (Recruitment of ex-offenders)

- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a candidate from working with the Council. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

- The Council actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Candidates are selected based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

- As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to assess a candidate's suitability for positions of trust, the Council complies with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all candidates for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

- A DBS is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS is required, the job description will clearly state if a DBS is required and the appropriate level. In addition, the job advert will usually contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the candidate being offered the position.

- We will ensure that officers in the Council who are involved in the recruitment process are able to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Where a DBS is to form part of the recruitment process, candidates are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. This information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

- Unless the nature of the position permits the Council to ask questions about a candidate's entire criminal record the Council only asks about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- At interview, or in a separate discussion, the Council will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

- Any matters disclosed in a DBS will be discussed with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

- DBS checks are undertaken on eligible positions within the Council and are renewed every three years.

- The Council will not normally accept certificates carried out by other organisations unless the candidate is registered to use the update service.

- In circumstances where employees are externally seconded from another organisation into the Council, the above process will apply. Where employees are externally seconded from the Council into another organisation, the above process would continue to apply for their substantive position.

13.7 Other pre-employment checks include:

- Academic / professional qualifications and registration where applicable
- Work health assessment

14. Probation

14.1 All new employees joining the Council will be required to successfully complete a 6-month probationary period. This is the opportunity for new employees to establish themselves in the position and for the manager to assess how well they are settling in, monitor the employees' performance, and identify any development needs. Regular supervision is provided for all employees and notes from these sessions will be used to inform the successful completion of the probationary period.

14.2 If the manager is satisfied with performance then the probation period will be signed off and the employee's appointment in the position will be confirmed.

14.3 Any areas of concern in the employee's performance should be highlighted as soon as possible and the employee should be provided with the appropriate support and training necessary for them to achieve an acceptable standard of performance. Any expectations and goals should be given clearly, and in good time so that the employee has the opportunity to improve their performance. A comprehensive record should be kept of the areas that require improvement, the requirement to improve performance and how that can be achieved. In all cases the manager must show that they have acted fairly and given the employee the opportunity to improve.

14.4 In some cases it may be appropriate to extend the probationary period where an individual has shown progress in achieving the required standards but further time is required to assess; or take the necessary steps to terminate the employee's employment when all other options have been exhausted. Advice should be sought from Organisational Development when consideration is being given to extending a probationary period, and this should normally only be for a maximum of a further three months.

14.5 Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the manager will forward the completed probationary paperwork to Organisational Development. The employee will then be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period.

14.6 In the event that the employee fails to reach the required standard then the manager, with support from Organisational Development, should hold a meeting with the employee to terminate their employment. This should be followed up in writing with the reasons for termination clearly stated in the letter.

14.7 In some cases where an employee within their probationary period has a significant proportion of the six-month period away from the workplace, advice should be sought from Organisational Development regarding an extension to the probationary period to take account of this period

15. Induction

15.1 After a successful recruitment and selection process, supporting a new employee through a robust induction programme is the best way to help a new employee settle into the organisation and is the first part of a successful retention programme. All new employees who commence with the Council, whether an internal or external appointee will need to receive an induction into their position and service as well as information about the broader priorities and operations of the Council.

15.2 Local, job-specific induction will be the responsibility of the employing directorate and managers should ensure that a programme is in place to welcome the newly appointed individual, encourage them to feel part of the organisation and to be effective in their new position. A good induction programme reinforces positive first impressions and makes the new employee feel welcome and ready to contribute fully. A manager's guide to induction and induction checklists are available on the intranet. It is every manager's responsibility to ensure that new employees are appropriately inducted and the relevant checklists (e.g., Health & Safety) are completed and retained for future reference.

15.3 All new employees will be provided with login details to enable them to complete the Council's online Corporate Induction, which should be completed within one month of starting. Employees without IT access should be supported by their manager to complete the online induction.

16. Record Keeping

16.1 Recruiting managers should forward all recruitment paperwork through to Organisational Development, where it will be retained for a specified period from the date of the interview and then destroyed in line with the Record Retention and Disposal Policy. For the successful candidate, all appropriate recruitment paperwork will be retained on their Organisational Development personal file.

17. Appointment of Former Employees

17.1 As detailed in the Council's Pay Policy employees who have left the employment of the Council on the grounds of voluntary redundancy or voluntary severance which included a financial package, will not usually be re-employed or re-engaged in any way (i.e. by way of agency or consultancy). In exceptional cases only and where there has been a break of more than two years, re-engagement will be subject to Corporate Leadership Team approval on the basis of a report outlining a critical business case. In cases that concern the Chief Executive, Directors or Chief Officers, Full Council approval will be required.

18. Complaints

18.1 If a candidate considers that their non-appointment is on the basis of procedural irregularities or suspected unfair treatment the candidate may make a complaint.

First Stage - Complaint
The complaint should initially be raised with the recruiting manager or their manager and a written response provided to the complainant within a reasonable timescale.

Second Stage - Complaint
If after the first stage the candidate is still dissatisfied, the candidate may complain in writing to the Head of Organisational Development outlining the details of the complaint. Such complaints will be investigated by the Head of Organisational Development, their representative or an independent person, where the interview notes and all other documentation on the recruitment file may be reviewed. There may be a need to interview employees involved in the recruitment process for the purpose of ascertaining and analysing the facts. A report of the investigation will be discussed with the Corporate Director. Depending on the individual circumstances in each case, substantiation of the complaint could lead to the application of the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

19. Review

19.1 This Policy will be reviewed periodically in light of developments in recruitment and selection practice and legal requirements to ensure that best practice is maintained.

20. Training

20.1 Training for officers involved in the recruitment and selection process is mandatory to ensure that they recruit in a fair and consistent manner and that they are aware of their legal responsibilities and is available through our online learning platform.

21. Collaborative Working

21.1 Increasingly as an organisation the Council is working with partner organisations. This may have implications on the recruitment and selection of employees, for instance in the following areas:

- Development of joint advertisements.
- Involvement of representatives from several organisations in the process.
- The need to determine which organisation will manage the process e.g. paperwork and record keeping.

21.2 It is essential, therefore, that consideration is given to such matters when initially entering into partnerships and joint working arrangements.

22. Secondments

22.1 A secondment is where an employee temporarily covers the full duties of a higher graded, or alternative position within the Council for a period of at least four weeks for any other reason than the annual leave of an officer. Secondment opportunities can provide valuable opportunities for both career and personal development.

22.2 Secondments can offer an effective means of filling vacancies; however, it is important to recognise that secondments are only a short-term solution to a particular situation and should not be used as a substitute for permanent, or for long term temporary appointments. It is recommended that a secondment, in normal circumstances should be no longer than one years duration and should be subject to regular review.

22.3 Managers will exercise their discretion to decide whether a vacancy is a suitable secondment opportunity with advice from Organisational Development.

22.4 Selection will be based solely on merit and the candidate's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position and will be subject to the normal selection process.

22.5 An employee interested in applying for a secondment opportunity must obtain the consent of their manager before making an application. The manager should make the decision based on the exigencies of the services and in the case where a request is denied then the employee should be provided with the reasons for the refusal.

22.6 The manager will be responsible for ensuring that measures can be put in place to backfill the seconded employee, this could be by means of employing a temporary employee, paying an honorarium or a consequential secondment.

22.7 Once appointed an employee will be formally notified in writing of the terms and conditions of the secondment. The salary to be paid will be the salary that would apply were the employee promoted to the higher graded post.

22.8 The successful employee should be released from their substantive position at the earliest opportunity, taking account of operational considerations and no later than their normal required notice period. Seconded employees must be afforded regular contact with their service area.

22.9 Secondments will be expected to run for their projected period but may be terminated early by either the employee on secondment, or management subject to one month's notice. Where an employee is absent for a period of one month consideration may be given to ending the secondment.

22.10 An employee will return to their substantive position at the end of the secondment.

22.11 Where a manager has a request for a secondment external to the Council, advice should be sought from Organisational Development.

23. Temporary/Fixed Term Appointments

23.1 Temporary appointments are only acceptable for short term unplanned temporary vacancies or to arrange temporary cover for a permanent vacancy in the short term while arrangements are being made to advertise the position. Fixed term appointments should only be made where it is deemed a position will last for a specific period, such as to cover a project, or where a position is externally funded.

24. Market Supplements

24.1 The Council recognises that in certain exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to apply a market supplement. Further detail on market supplements is set out in Appendix 2.

25. Agency Workers

25.1 The use of employment agencies to supply temporary workers must be regulated and any manager wishing to engage the services of an agency should seek the necessary approval.

25.2 The Council has a main preferred supplier for agency workers details can be sought from Organisational Development.

25.3 Prior to any agency worker starting an assignment with the Council, the recruiting manager should ensure that all relevant checks are requested from the Agency at the outset and are in place prior to any assignment starting with the Council.

25.4 Agency workers should not be used to fill long term vacancies and should be used as a short-term measure.

26. Apprenticeships

26.1 There are many benefits to apprenticeships such as developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Apprenticeships could provide opportunities to upskill existing employees, who may be interested in a new position or career development, or there may be opportunities to advertise a vacancy as an external apprenticeship opportunity.

26.2 It is important to note, that apprenticeships should provide the apprentice with the skills and experience to gain employment following the completion of their qualification.

26.3 The Council does not guarantee a role upon completion of an apprenticeship programme, however, where an apprentice has successfully completed their apprenticeship programme and there is a suitably graded post within the directorate, they may be slotted into this post as long as they meet the essential criteria of the role. The manager and Aspire Mentor will need to assess the Apprentices suitability for the role, and complete the appropriate paperwork prior to a decision being made to slot an apprentice into a vacancy with the Council.

Appendix 1: Leavers Questionnaires and Exit Interviews

Leaver's questionnaires and interviews are voluntary but are good practice to gather valuable feedback on how well the Council is performing as an employer. They help to understand the reasons why employees are leaving and where change is necessary to improve the employment experience and assist with employee retention.

All employees voluntarily leaving the employment of the Council will be given the opportunity to provide feedback normally prior to their employment ending. The following sets out the process for leavers questionnaires and exit interviews:

- Upon receipt of a letter of resignation, the manager should acknowledge the letter in writing, and complete the termination of employment form to avoid any overpayment.

- The letter of resignation and a copy of the acknowledgement letter should be forwarded to Organisational Development to be retained.

- On receipt of the termination of employment form, Organisational Development will send the employee a leaver's questionnaire for completion with the opportunity to attend an optional leaver's discussion.

- A leavers discussion will be conducted by the employee's manager; or where requested by the leaver, an appropriate alternative manager or a representative from Organisational Development prior to termination.

- The purpose of a leaver's discussion is to allow the employee the opportunity to expand on, and discuss, the area's they have highlighted within their Leavers Questionnaire. A template for the leaver's discussion can be found on the intranet.

- If any issues arise during the course of the interview that need to be dealt with, these should be managed in accordance with Council policies, and advice sought from Organisational Development.

- Information provided during the exit process must be treated in confidence and used solely for the purpose for which it was collected.

- Leaver's discussions are voluntary, and as such if the leaver does not wish to discuss their reasons for leaving this should be respected.

Appendix 2: Market Supplements – NJC Local Government Services

The Council recognises that it may be necessary from time to time to apply a market supplement to an assessed grade of a position. Usually this will be as a result of a skill shortage in the jobs market (local or national), or because the market rate for a particular skill set is higher than that determined by local job evaluation and the grading structure.

A market supplement is a discretionary payment which is paid in addition to the basic salary of a position(s). The payment is designed to address exceptional circumstances when the Council is experiencing or clearly identifies severe recruitment and retention difficulties, and in particular when those difficulties are as a result of offering a lower salary than that which is being offered by other employers within the market identified for that particular post. There must be clear evidence that the basic pay for a specific post determined by the Council's job evaluation process is significantly less than the relevant market rate of pay for a similar post.

The payment of a market supplement will need to be subject to objectively justified grounds i.e., that recruitment and retention difficulties exist in relation to the job(s) concerned which would result in foreseeable organisational and/or operational problems. The decision to pay a market supplement will only be taken when all other non-pay related measures to recruit and/or retain a staff member have been reasonably explored. The extent to which the various measures are explored depends entirely on each individual case.

The Council will justify a market supplement by gathering clear and detailed evidence for awarding such a payment, including information on recruitment and/or retention problems within the Council and external pay data. Types of evidence will include:

- Salary benchmark data, what is the 'going rate' for the job?
- Comparisons with the public and/or private sector depending on the nature of the post.
- Evidence of any recent (unsuccessful) recruitment processes e.g. How has the post been advertised in the past? Has the correct media been used? What is the response rate to adverts? What is the turnover rate for the post?
- The level and overall cost of the recommended supplements.
- Any alternative measures that have or could be considered e.g., could the post be remodelled to deliver the service required?
- Details of any perceived detrimental impact on service delivery including operational and/or reputational risks of failure to recruit (or retain) the right calibre of employee(s).
- Details of any potential knock-on effects and how they might be resolved e.g., maintenance of pay relativities between posts within a section or work group.

The business case for a market supplement is subject to approval of the Corporate Director in consultation with the Head of Organisational Development. In exceptional circumstances for those staff not employed under the NJC for Local Government Services it will be a matter for CLT or Council's consideration as appropriate.

The duration of the market supplement will be determined at the outset with a maximum period of 1 year. The terms of the market supplement will be clearly defined in the advertisement and contract of employment. All payments will cease at the end of the approved payment time. In exceptional circumstances where there is a need to continue the payment of a market supplement a new business case will need to be approved. Market supplements are funded by the employing directorate.

Appendix 3: Definition of Workers

Permanent Employees

A permanent employee is a full time or part time individual who is employed by the Council on a permanent contract. The employee will have full employment rights in line with current legislation, as outlined in their statement of particulars. There is no expected end date of their employment and they will accrue continuous service.

Permanent employees will accrue all relevant entitlements and benefits in line with the Council's terms and conditions i.e. sick pay and annual leave.

Fixed Term Employees

A fixed-term contract is one that ends on a specified date or on the occurrence of a particular event such as the loss of funding or the completion of a task. A fixed term employee can be a temporary replacement for an absent employee whose contract will terminate upon the return of the regular employee. After four years' continuous service in a fixed term position the manager should refer to the Fixed Term Regulations for further guidance, as the employee will be entitled to permanent status.

Employees recruited on such a contract should be done so on the basis that there is a fixed period for which the work is expected to last and that the weekly hours are definitive e.g. to cover maternity leave or an externally funded project.

Fixed term employees will be entitled to the same benefits as a permanent worker, i.e. annual leave and sick pay.

Temporary Employees

Temporary contracts will have no expectation of permanence as the termination date or the event on which the employment will terminate is not known. An employee on a temporary contract will accrue continuous service from the start date of that contract.

Temporary employees will be entitled to sick pay, annual leave and the range of other benefits the Council offers, where applicable.

An employee should be recruited on a temporary contract if the work is expected to be of a temporary nature but the end date is not known e.g. to cover a period of sickness of a permanent employee. Contractual hours should be stipulated for the purposes of a temporary contract.

Relief Employees

Relief employees should be recruited as a way of dealing with a variable need for work i.e. short term absences. Employees of this nature should only be used on an ad hoc basis and will not work regularly and consistently.

Relief employees should only be paid at the bottom of the grade and will not move through any grade increments. A relief employee will not benefit from the range of entitlements to which other employees of the Council are entitled.

If relief employees are allowed to build up regular and consistent hours then this will become a risk to the Council.

Relief employees should be regularly monitored by managers and termination paperwork completed routinely when the employee is no longer required, to ensure there is an accurate record of all current employees.

Term-Time Employees

A term-time contract is defined by an employee working only during periods that coincide with the school terms and is not required to work during school holidays. Term-time employees will be employed based on the number of weeks they work per year and remuneration will be calculated on a pro rata basis which will be inclusive of their annual leave entitlement.

Term-time employees will not be permitted to take leave during school time but will be entitled to the same other benefits of the Council such as sick pay.

Part Time Employees

A part time employee will be defined as such if they work fewer hours than the Council's normal full-time hours (37 hours per week). Part time employees will not be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers, nor will they be entitled to any benefits which exceed a full time equivalent.

Agency Workers

The Council has a contract to source all agency workers. All administration relating to annual leave and sick pay will be administered by the contractor directly. It should be understood that Agency Workers are not employees of the Council.

When recruiting, a manager should carefully consider the type of contract that would best suit the required need to ensure efficiency of the service. Due consideration should be given throughout the duration of any contract that is not permanent to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and meets the need of the service. Managers should change the nature of the contract if the situation changes e.g. a relief employee who has started to pick up regular shifts as a result of long-term sickness should be terminated as a relief employee and given a temporary contract.