



HYNDBURN

**The place to be
an excellent council**

Recruitment and Selection Framework

Issue 1:	April 2008	Approved: Council - 22 April 2008
		Updated: August 2011

CONTENTS

		Page Nos
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Aims of the Framework and Toolkit	1
3.	Guiding Principles	2
4.	The Legal Framework	2
5.	Roles and Responsibilities in Recruitment and Selection	6
6.	HR Policies and Procedures	8
7.	Contract Type	9
8.	The Agreed Procedure	11
9.	Further Advice and Support	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hyndburn Borough Council is committed to providing services efficiently, effectively and economically to the community. Equally the Council wishes to preserve its reputation as a fair and equitable employer who provides good working conditions and where the highest standards of service can be achieved and maintained.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that a flexible approach to recruitment and selection is necessary for various reasons, including:
- Increased partnership working.
 - Developments in technology for example in the areas of job advertising and job applications.
 - The vast range of skills, competencies and knowledge required by the Council.
 - The pace of change.
 - Expectations of the labour market.
 - Workforce planning.
- 1.3 However, there is still an agreed process that needs to be followed, as well as the guiding principles that are to be adhered to by anyone in the Council who is carrying out recruitment and selection activities. This Framework summarises the process and guiding principles.
- 1.4 A separate Recruitment and Selection Toolkit gives more detailed information about the practicalities of how to recruit and select employees, from establishing whether a vacancy exists to a new recruit starting in a job. The Toolkit also gives examples about where the Framework allows for flexibility in its application. The Framework and the Toolkit must be read in conjunction with one another.
- 1.5 Further support and guidance is available from HR. In addition, a Recruitment and Selection skills training course will be available for all line managers and selection panel members. Elected Members required to be on a selection panel will be appropriately briefed on the Recruitment and Selection procedure.

2. Aims of the Framework and Toolkit

- 2.1 The aims of the Framework and the Toolkit together are to:
- Ensure anyone involved in the recruitment and selection of employees to the Council is following good management practice and adhering to relevant legislation.
 - Promote a planned, consistent yet flexible approach to recruitment and selection, taking into account the needs of the Council, the needs of the service, the existing skills, competencies and knowledge available and the required skills, competencies and knowledge.
 - Give practical guidance to those involved in recruitment and selection, at all stages of the process.
 - Equip selection panels to assess, objectively and fairly, the skills, competencies and knowledge of candidates against those required for the job so that the most effective candidate for the post is selected.

- Promote a positive image of the Council as an employer and in delivery of services.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 The Framework has been drawn up having regard to the following guiding principles:

- **Fairness and Equality** – ensuring that we always appoint the most suitable person for the job by assessing skills, abilities and knowledge using fair and transparent methods. A candidate who believes they have been unfairly discriminated against can complain about the process and the selection panel may be asked to justify their actions at an internal hearing or an Employment Tribunal.
- **Service Improvement** – striving to employ a diverse workforce that generally reflects the local population. This enables the Council to respond to our customers and develop services that are accessible and that meet their needs.
- **Safe Recruitment** – The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- **Consistency** – ensuring that the agreed process is applied consistently across the organisation. Whilst it is recognised that a variety of recruitment and selection methods can be used depending on the circumstances, it is essential there is a record of the methods used and the selection decisions made.
- **Workforce Planning** – ensuring that Managers recognise the need to have in place appropriate systems to facilitate the effective planning of human resources across the Council to meet both current and future service needs and the needs of staff.
- **Monitoring** – recognising the need to monitor staffing levels on a regular basis to provide effective strategic management information on the composition of the Council's workforce and comply with statutory requirements.

4. The Legal Framework

4.1 **Introduction** - The Recruitment and Selection Framework and Toolkit have been drawn up in accordance with relevant statutory provisions. The main legislative requirements are summarised below.

4.2 **Discrimination** - It is unlawful to discriminate against a job applicant on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief. Applicants who feel that they have been discriminated against have the right to take their case to an Employment Tribunal. Internal candidates have to exhaust the grievance procedure prior to appealing to an Employment Tribunal.

It is important that you keep documentation relating to selection activities so that reasons for your decisions are clear. In the event of a challenge you will be required to produce evidence and explain your decision making. There is no upper limit on the amount of compensation that can be awarded by the Employment Tribunal.

Direct discrimination arises when a person is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances on the grounds covered by the legislation. Complainants alleging direct discrimination usually have to compare themselves with either an actual or hypothetical comparator to show less favourable treatment.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied to a post which has the effect of disadvantaging the group that are protected by the legislation. Indirect discrimination is concerned not only with less favourable treatment but with inherent or acquired disadvantage of some groups in relation to others.

Examples of indirect discrimination include:

- Applicants must be over 5ft 8ins because of equipment stored at a high level. Fewer women than men would be able to meet this requirement and the condition is unjustifiable since there are simple solutions (e.g. stepladders).
- Academic qualifications must have been obtained in the UK.
- Work experience must be continuous.

Summary of relevant anti-discriminatory legislation

Act / Regulations / Directive	Unlawful to discriminate on grounds of:	Unlawful to discriminate in the areas of:
Equality Act 2010	Race	Employment, vocational training, education, housing, exercise of public functions, provision of goods, facilities and services. Duty to promote equality and good relations between different racial groups.
	Disability	Employment (employers have a duty to make any reasonable adjustments for disabled employees), education, access to goods, facilities and services. Duty to promote equality in relation to disabled people and gender.
	Gender	Employment, vocational training, education. Legal duty to promote equality in relation to gender.
	Marital status and Civil Partnership	
	Gender re-assignment	Employment, vocational training
	Religion or belief	Employment, vocational training
	Sexual orientation	Employment, vocational training
	Age	Employment, vocational training
	Pregnancy and maternity,	Employment, vocational training

Positive Action - There is provision under the legislation to take positive action in particular circumstances. This includes:

- Genuine Occupational Requirement - The Equality Act 2010 allows, in limited circumstances, if you can show that someone with a protected characteristic is central to

a particular job, you can insist that only someone who has that protected characteristic is suitable for the job. For example in a faith based establishment where the post holder contributes to the religious ethos of the establishment.

Positive Discrimination - This is unlawful under most of the legislation. However positive action can be taken in relation to disability, for example by:

- Guaranteeing interviews for applicants with a disability who meet the short-listing criteria.
- Consulting disabled employees regularly.
- Retaining employees who become disabled.

Disability Discrimination - Employers have a duty to make any reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. In terms of recruitment and selection, managers must ensure that selection activities are accessible and not discriminatory, questions are not asked about the candidate's disability and consideration is given to how the post can be adjusted. For example, by considering reduced hours, acquiring specialist equipment or redistributing duties within the team. You will need to challenge yourself to think differently about the alternative ways that your service can be delivered.

4.3 Other Relevant Legislation

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 - Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a conviction can be regarded as spent when the rehabilitation period is complete, provided:

- The conviction did not carry a sentence excluded from the Act, such as a custodial sentence of over two and a half years. (Custodial sentences of over two and a half years are never considered spent).
- No further convictions occurred within the rehabilitation period.

Once it is spent the individual does not have to reveal its existence in most circumstances (i.e. they can answer 'no' to the question 'do you have a criminal record?'). Certain occupations are exceptions, broadly these are:

- Those involving work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Professions in areas such as health and the law.

The relevance of an applicant's criminal record is a matter for the selection panel to consider. The risk assessment should be based on:

- The nature of the offence in the context of the work, the work environment, exposure to money, property or vulnerable people.
- The circumstances leading up to an offence.
- Repeat offences.
- The length of time since the offence.
- The extent of supervision available in the post.

An applicant should be assessed on whether they meet the requirements of the job and not automatically rejected on the basis of a declared conviction.

Equal Pay Act 1970 - The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are doing the same

or similar work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. The Act applies to both men and women and any comparison must be with a person of the opposite sex. The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970 and came into force in 1975.

Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990 - The Act places restrictions on the political activities of particular officers and defines those posts which are politically restricted. These include Chief Officers, posts with salaries of SCP 44 or more and posts below SCP 44 which appear to the Council to be politically sensitive on applying certain statutory criteria. Contact your HR department for a full list of politically restricted posts.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 - It is a criminal offence to employ someone who does not have permission to live and work in the U.K. To avoid difficulties in these areas the HR department will require proof of evidence of approval to work in the UK e.g. birth certificate, passport, NI number etc.

Police Act 1997 - It is a legal requirement to carry out a Criminal Records Bureau check on employees who will be working with children or vulnerable adults. Again, this process will be arranged by the HR department before confirmation of an offer of a post is given to a successful candidate.

Working Time Regulations 1998 - The Working Time Regulations incorporate standards that employers are obliged to comply with, for example for rest periods and maximum working hours. The standards are enforceable by the Health and Safety Executive. You will need to ensure that any working arrangements are within the scope of the Regulations. New starters are advised in their offer letter that their working week should not exceed 48 hours over a rolling 17 week period unless they have expressly agreed otherwise in writing with Hyndburn Borough Council.

Data Protection Act 1998 - Applicants are notified that details in their application forms will be used in accordance with the Act. This means that information is confidential and can only be used for assessment and selection, and for employment records if their application is successful. At the end of the recruitment and selection process HR departments will retain documents relating to successful candidates. All documents relating to unsuccessful candidates will be retained by the HR department and destroyed after agreed timescales.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - The basic principle of the Freedom of Information Act is that anyone can submit a written request to see any information we hold and we have to provide it to them within 20 working days, subject to any fees or exemptions. This reinforces a culture of openness. We cannot assume that any information is exempt because it is 'internal' or 'confidential'. FOIA applies to all information we hold, in any format and is fully retrospective. In principle all of this information is now accessible to anyone who submits a written request, and we can only refuse to disclose it by reference to an exemption in the Act. Contact the Freedom of Information Officer for further details.

Fixed Term Employees' (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 - The Regulations have established a statutory mechanism for limiting the use of successive fixed-term contracts to four years, unless objectively justified. There is no time limit on the first contract and only service accumulated after 10th July, 2002, will count towards the four year time limit. The renewal of a contract of four years or more, without objective justification, will lead to the contract being treated as a permanent one. In order to provide objective justification it is necessary to give detailed and specific reasons why the Fixed Term Contract will expire at the given date, for example when funding will cease or a project will end.

If a fixed term contract worker has been employed for more than 12 months, non renewal of that fixed term contract is legally considered to be a dismissal. It will therefore be necessary to identify why the contract is not being renewed and follow a fair process in selecting and dismissing the fixed term worker. Under the Dispute Resolution Regulations 2004, an employee with over 12 months service must be consulted, in line with the statutory Dismissal

and Disciplinary Procedure, if their Fixed Term Contract is not being renewed, otherwise the dismissal will be automatically unfair.

Children Act 2004 - Safe and robust recruitment practices are one of the key ways the Council can demonstrate a clear and tangible commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and its statutory guidance places a legal duty on a wide group of organisations to ensure that arrangements for the safe recruitment of individuals are in place and are effectively and consistently implemented.

Equality Act 2006 - The Equality Act establishes the Commission for Equality and Human Rights that will come into being in October 2007. It dissolves the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission. In addition the Act makes provision about discrimination on religion and belief, enables provision to be made about discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, imposes duties relating to sex discrimination on persons performing public functions, amends the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and other connected purposes.

Equality Act 2010- The most important of these acts for us at this moment in time is the Equality bill 2010, which received Royal Assent on 8th April 2010 and became the Equality Act 2010. Key public sector duties have come into effect from April 2011. The Equality act contains a range of new rights, powers and obligations to help the drive towards equality. It aims to strengthen and simplify the equality law that is already in place, such as the Race relations act and Disability Discrimination Act. The Act has nine protected characteristics, which are defined below:

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

5. Roles and Responsibilities in Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Undertaking Recruitment and Selection skills training course **before** being involved in recruitment and selection activities. Also, attending any other relevant training courses identified during personal development planning, for example Equality training.
- Ensuring all their team members involved in recruitment and selection, and any other selection panel members, are aware of the Framework and Toolkit and normally have attended Recruitment and Selection training, as well as other relevant training courses identified.
- Understanding, referring to and complying with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Framework and the Toolkit.
- Keeping up to date with relevant legislation and Council policies, as identified in paragraph 6 below, and referring to further information and guidance if necessary.
- Informing HR on every occasion that they have a vacancy to fill, including where the vacancy is likely to be short term or subject to internal ring fencing or slotting in arrangements.
- Planning the recruitment and selection process to ensure sufficient time and effort is afforded to the activity.
- Following agreed procedures and processes to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and which help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or who are otherwise unsuited to work with them.
- Chairing and convening the selection panel.
- Liaising with HR to ensure relevant paperwork (including job description and person specification) and monitoring information is submitted and retained.
- Managing induction for new employees, ensuring attendance at corporate and departmental events and leading on-the-job induction linked to setting objectives, identifying support and development planning.

5.2 Selection Panel Members (including the Chair) are responsible for:

- Attending appropriate training courses, in particular Recruitment and Selection.
- Ensuring that the whole recruitment and selection activity is well planned and that sufficient time has been allowed for each stage of the process.
- Ensuring selection methods and decisions are objective, fair and recorded.

- The Chair of the panel is responsible for providing feedback to applicants, or nominating an appropriate selection panel member to do this.

5.3 HR are responsible for:

- Providing support, advice and guidance to Managers/Supervisors and other selection panel members.
- Ensuring the establishment is updated and maintained.
- Ensuring a post is established in terms of job evaluation and approval by the Managing Director before allowing a vacancy to be advertised.
- Ensuring documentation and notifications are processed and forwarded to HR as appropriate.
- Monitoring the fairness, consistency and quality of selection activities by attending around 10% of selection panels and providing constructive feedback to selection panel members and relevant managers.
- Ensuring selection methods used are appropriate and fair.
- Ensuring the Recruitment and Selection Framework is relevant, up to date and meets legislative requirements.
- Facilitating Chief Officer Recruitment and Selection, including liaising with Elected Members, the Chief Executive and Directors to convene selection panels.
- Monitoring recruitment and selection decisions.
- Managing the redeployment procedure.
- Supplying appropriate and up to date documentation to facilitate the recruitment and selection process.
- Processing, retaining and issuing documentation as appropriate.
- Ensuring clearances are obtained as appropriate.
- Providing appropriate Recruitment and Selection training for managers, selection panel members and Elected Members.
- Managing Assessment Centres for Chief Officers and Senior Managers and other posts as appropriate.
- Providing induction training as appropriate.
- Publishing dates of training courses.
- Monitoring managers' attendances at Essential Skills and Knowledge courses, including Recruitment and Selection skills training.

5.4 Elected Members:

- Must attend the appropriate internal training course prior to any involvement in Chief Officer Recruitment and Selection.

- Are responsible for Chief Officer Selection.

6. HR Policies and Procedures

The Framework and Toolkit should be applied in conjunction with relevant Council policies and procedures, including:

- Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Redeployment Policy & Procedure
- Guidelines on redeployment of a disabled employee.
- Guidance Honorarium payments.
- Criminal Records Bureau – Code of Practice for Registered Bodies and Explanatory Guide for Personnel Officers
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy.
- Flexible Working Policy
- Probationary Period Procedure (Induction)
- Capability Policy

7. Contract Type

- 7.1 **Introduction** - There are a number of different types of contract depending on the nature of the work or project. The line manager, or an appropriate senior manager, should assess the options, take advice from HR and recruit to the most appropriate type.
- 7.2 **Permanent Contract** - This is the most common type of contract and is suitable for posts where the business need for the post is long term. Permanent Contracts must always be advertised externally (unless the department can objectively justify an internal advert, and this has been approved by HR).
- 7.3 **Secondment** - A secondment will help the organisation to respond to specific, time constrained resource requirements, for example:
- When specialist skills are required for a time-limited period to deliver a particular piece of work.
 - To support operations in an area that has recruitment difficulties.
 - When external funding is available for a limited period to complete a project.
 - Where a secondment facilitates workforce planning.
 - Supporting restructuring activities.

There should be evidence to suggest that the vacancy is unlikely to be filled externally, for example if recent recruitment to similar short term posts has not generated external interest. Further guidance is available from HR.

- 7.4 **Fixed Term Contract (FTC)** - Again this is suitable for covering work over a specific time period, in particular that which is project based or reliant on external funding. A FTC must be advertised externally and give clear start and end dates. If the FTC is so short term that it is felt the cost of advertising is prohibitive then it may be more appropriate to consider a secondment.

Employees on FTCs must not be treated less favourably than permanent employees. In addition FTC employees can ask for the status of their employment to be confirmed in writing

when they have been employed on a succession of FTCs for over four years. The Council is obliged to respond to such requests within 21 days. Advice on the Fixed Term Employees' (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 can be obtained from HR.

- 7.5 **Job Share** - It could be that a selected candidate requests to job share. The Council intends the job share opportunities within the Council's employ will be made as widely available as possible through the provision of the scheme. It is acknowledged that it will not prove possible to advertise every vacancy as a job share opportunity. However, Heads of Service are encouraged to consider the merits of offering job share for as many vacancies as possible as they arise.

Key Considerations to be taken in to consideration

- The nature of the work and the physical arrangement
- The working arrangements to apply
- The division of responsibilities. An agreed arrangement may split the total duties and responsibilities or these may be apportioned. Although this may affect the content of a job sharer's individual workload, the job description for the whole job should remain unchanged. It will however be essential that both job sharers be capable and willing to carry out the whole range of duties attached to the post.
- The timing of the arrangement will be at the discretion of management, but will not normally be longer than three months after the date of agreement in writing to the arrangement.

Note: In determining the suitability of a job share partnership, management will need to be satisfied that the proposed pattern of working meets the demands of both the job and the sharers.

Further information is in the Job Share Policy.

- 7.6 **Agency worker** - The Council does not wish to encourage the use of Agency workers, preferring to use a more planned approach to human resources. However, it is recognised that there are occasions where Agency workers offer the most practical solution, for example to cover short absence periods or unanticipated peaks in work demands.

Where it is known in advance that the need for an Agency worker is for over three months then a secondment or Fixed Term Contract should normally be advertised instead. Extending an existing Agency worker beyond three months can only be done following a review by a senior manager and the HR department.

- 7.7 **Short Term Cover** – e.g. Sickness absence, where the initial duration is estimated to be between 4 and 12 weeks cover can be arranged locally at the discretion of the Service Manager. In these circumstances staff can only be recruited for a maximum period of 12 weeks, after this the contract will normally be terminated. In exceptional circumstances the line manager may contact HR for approval to extend the contract beyond a 12 week period, (i.e. to allow a permanent recruitment process to be finalized).

- 7.8 **Slotting in and Ring-fencing Arrangements** - In the event of a re-structure or re-organisation the Redeployment Policy and Procedure, will apply.

If an individual refuses to accept a post offered or is not successful in a ring-fenced selection exercise then their future employment with Hyndburn Borough Council may be at risk.

8. The Agreed Procedure

The steps in the recruitment and selection procedure are outlined briefly in the table below. Certain steps may not be applicable depending on the circumstances. Information about how to achieve each of these steps in line with statutory and Council requirements is contained in the Recruitment and Selection Toolkit. Links to appropriate documents and forms are provided in the Toolkit.

Process	Activity	Officers involved
Step 1	Action employee's resignation and send an exit questionnaire or arrange a meeting if employee is leaving or transferring between departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR
Step 2	Establish a vacancy exists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager Chief Officer or Senior Manager of service
Step 3	Disestablish post if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager HR
Step 4	Convene a selection panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager (Chair)
Step 5	Consider progress against corporate equality targets i.e. underrepresentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager
Step 6	Undertake job analysis and update or write Job Description and Person Specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR
Step 7	Select assessment methods and record on Person Specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager
Step 8	Conduct a risk assessment for CRB check, if not already done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line Manager
Step 8	Choose most appropriate contract type (e.g. permanent, fixed term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR
Step 9	For a new post – arrange job evaluation and Managing Director approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR Managing Director
Step 10	Choose appropriate advertising methods to generate pool of applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR
Step 11	Submit paperwork for advert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager HR
Step 12	Review whether suitable opportunity for any employee whose job is at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR
Step 13	Selection takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager Selection panel

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR
Step 14	Candidate selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection panel
Step 15	Appointment process followed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR
Step 16	Give feedback as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager or nominated panel member
Step 17	Plan induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager • HR
Step 18	Set up Probationary Period Review dates when start date known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager • HR
Step 19	Ensure all records and documentation are returned to the HR department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager • Selection panel • HR
Step 20	Evaluate the procedure and review areas that could be done differently next time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager
Step 21	Monitoring – ensure Equal Opps form has been completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager • HR

9. Further Advice and Support

9.1 Further advice and support is available from HR.

9.2 The documents overleaf are available on the Hyntranet:

- All HR policies and procedures.
- Documents and forms provided by the HR.

9.3 HR provides training on policies and procedures, including skills based training. Line managers and selection panel members should undertake the training before they start recruitment and selection activities. Contact the HR for details of availability.

9.4 After attending the training course individuals should sit on a selection panel with experienced panel members before they Chair a panel themselves. HR can provide details of relevant opportunities where they are not available in smaller teams.

9.5 HR can provide advice on other development opportunities available, such as:

- Equality Training.
- Refreshing Recruitment and Selection knowledge.



HYNDBURN

The place to be
an excellent council

Recruitment and Selection Toolkit

<u>Issue</u> <u>1</u>	<u>April 2008</u>	Approved: Council - 22 April 2008
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CONTENTS

		Page Nos
	Letter from Managing Director	1
1.	Retention of Existing Staff	2
2.	Planning and Preparation	2
3.	Maintaining Records	4
4.	Joint Recruitment and Selection – Partnership Working	4
5.	Receiving an Employee's Resignation	4
6.	Establishing Whether a Vacancy Exists	5
7.	Disestablished Posts	6
8.	Convene Selection Panel	6
9.	Equality Targets	7
10.	Job Analysis	8
11.	Producing the Job Description and Person Specification	8
12.	Writing the Job Description	9
13.	Writing the Person Specification	10
14.	Methods of Assessment	14
15.	Deciding Assessment Methods	17
16.	Approval for a New Post	18
17.	Attracting Applications	18
18.	Corporate Redeployment Procedure	22
19.	Selection	23
20.	Confirming the Outcome of the Selection Process	31

21.	Giving Feedback	32
22.	Induction	34
23.	Probationary Period	35
24.	Records Management	35
25.	Evaluating the Recruitment and Selection Process	35
26.	Complaints, Compliments and Comments	36
27.	Monitoring the Recruitment and Selection Procedure	36
	Appendix 1: Manager / Chair of Selection Panel Checklist	38

Dear Colleague

Hyndburn Borough Council is a great place to work.

As an organisation, we have an enviable track record for delivering high quality services that offer real value for money. People who work for the Council enjoy a good working environment and are proud and enthusiastic about serving the local area.

We want to attract the widest possible range of applicants and always ensure fair and objective consideration for everyone who applies. Our goal is to have a workforce that both understands and reflects the diverse nature of the community we serve. Our recruitment processes are regularly reviewed to ensure that we maintain the high standards that we set ourselves.

We know that people are our most valuable asset we have a simple philosophy - we recruit the best. This guide tells you how we do that, and sets out our expectations for managers involved in recruitment.

David Welsby
Managing Director

1. Retention of Existing Staff

Line managers should seek to retain, develop and manage the performance of their existing staff. **Research highlights the importance of line managers and how their behaviour relates directly to the levels of commitment, motivation and satisfaction reported by employees.** (Recruitment, retention and turnover survey 2005, CIPD). A poor relationship with a line manager is a key factor that leads to individuals deciding to leave their organisation. A lack of training and development opportunities is also a major reason for turnover.

Steady application of day to day management techniques can have a positive impact on retention, for example:

- Praise and constructive feedback.
- Supervision / regular one to ones.
- Regular communication.
- Personal development planning.
- Training and development opportunities with regular reviews.

Other methods influencing retention include:

- Recognising aspirations – Knowing where your team members see themselves in the future and helping them to gain the skills, knowledge and experience to apply for a promotion or a different post. This way, you may not retain them in your team, but there is an increased chance they will stay with the Council. This type of incentive will normally be suitable for employees who are performing well in their current role.
- Succession Planning / Workforce Development Planning – providing a career pathway that employees can aspire to. Where the Council considers that a significant investment has been made in the formal training and development of an individual that officer may given consideration prior to external advertising and if suitable be appointed
- Complying with the Council's Retirement Procedure.
- Flexible Working – Considering different working patterns requested by employees to help with work life balance. The needs of the employee will need to be balanced with the needs of the service. Refer to the Flexible Working Policy for guidelines.

2. Planning and Preparation

2.1 Forward Planning

Plan your activities **before** the recruitment and selection process begins. Planning in advance will help to reduce the overall time the process will take.

There are lots of stages to the process that involve others and this could affect your own timescales, for example:

- A new post, or a post which has changed significantly, has to be job evaluated
- A new post will have to be approved by the Chief Officer or Head of Service for your service area and further approval by the Managing Director
- A new post has to have a risk assessment conducted in relation to work with children and/or vulnerable adults to establish whether it should be the subject of a CRB check.
- HR timescales.
- Advertising deadlines.
- Capacity of HR.

- Existing commitments in the Selection Panel Members' diaries.
- Redeployment Procedure.
- Recruitment & Selection training.

Also remember that, in addition to the actual selection activities, your responsibilities include:

- **Leading the process.**
- **Completing appropriate documentation.**
- **Updating job descriptions and person specifications.**
- **Keeping HR up to date.**

All these activities are time consuming and you should not under-estimate the amount of time you will need to carry them out. It is recommended that you protect space in your diary around key dates so that you can give the process your full attention. Appendix 1 is a checklist for the Manager / Chair of the Selection Panel and will help you to plan ahead, estimate how long the process will take and monitor whether the process is on track. This is important, particularly if you have a project to deliver that is dependent on successful recruitment and selection.

2.2 Human Resources

HR will

- Deliver: professional advice and support. Inform them as early as you can that you have a vacancy or intend to create a new post. Liaise with them about methods of advertising, selection and assessment. With their knowledge and experience they can advise on good practice and help you choose an option and approach that suits your needs.
- Complete processes regarding: recruitment, appointment, termination administration, changes to personal details and processing HR management information. (You will find all the documents you require on the Hyntranet).
- Deliver Training

All selection panel members should normally undertake the Recruitment and Selection skills training before the recruitment and selection process starts. There may be rare occasions where officers are required to be a panel member and it is not possible to attend a training session prior to the interviews. In these cases, there must be at least one member of the panel who has received training and whose responsibility it is to advise the panel member on the correct process to follow. Organisational Development will deliver the training and advise on available dates. You will need to take into account that the skills training may not be arranged for a few months and plan ahead so that all concerned are fully trained and prepared.

3. Maintaining Records

It is recognised that a flexible approach to recruitment and selection is necessary. However you will still need to keep documents recording the process and tools that you used as well as the basis for decisions you have made. You may be challenged and asked to justify decisions you have made, at an internal hearing or at an Employment Tribunal, so it is important that you have evidence to back up your decisions. If an applicant claims discrimination has taken place the burden of proof may be on you to show that, on the balance of probability, your decision was not discriminatory. To do this you will need documentary evidence to support your methods and decisions.

At the end of the process (allowing time for applicants to ask for feedback) return all documents relating to unsuccessful candidates to HR, where they will be retained in line with agreed timescales and then destroyed.

4. Joint Recruitment and Selection – Partnership Working

Increasingly there are occasions where partnership working will result in joint recruitment and selection with an external organisation, for example in the health sector.

Where the successful candidate will be employed by Hyndburn Borough Council, the Chair of the panel **must** be a Hyndburn Borough Council employee who has undertaken the Recruitment and Selection training. The Chair should ensure that the principles and procedures in Hyndburn Borough Council's Recruitment and Selection Framework and Toolkit are adhered to. The partner organisation can be represented on the panel by an employee who has had previous recruitment and selection training and/or experience in their own organisation. Where selection involves three or more panel members, or more than one panel, Hyndburn Borough Council must have more representation than the partner organisation.

If the successful candidate will be employed by the partner organisation then the recruitment and selection practices of that organisation will apply. However, it is important that the guiding principles of Hyndburn's Framework are adhered to. As appropriate, the Council can:

- Request to be represented on the selection panel.
- Employ other monitoring methods, for example monitoring the quality of a service delivered by the successful candidate who is funded by the Council.

5. Receiving an Employee's Resignation

5.1 Administering a leaver

A resignation is normally verbal in the first instance and provides an opportunity for the employee and line manager to agree the notice period, leaving date and other issues such as annual leave owed. The line manager must then ensure the resignation is confirmed in writing. The line manager must send the following information to HR:

- A copy of the written resignation.
- A copy of the letter acknowledging the resignation
- Holiday entitlement and days taken.

5.2 Exit Questionnaire

When an employee resigns, they will receive an Exit questionnaire from HR. The employee has a choice about how they complete the form:

- They complete the form with their line manager. This permits an immediate opportunity to discuss or elaborate on any points raised. The form will be retained by HR for recording monitoring data.
- They complete the form independently and return it to HR. Information is recorded for monitoring and any issues if identified are dealt with as appropriate.
- They complete the form with a member of HR.

It is important to keep a copy of the form or notes from the meeting and use the information to:

- Attempt to establish the employee's reasons for leaving so that action may be taken to prevent others leaving for the same reasons, therefore improving retention.
- Examine the job content and the way in which the duties of the post are presently carried out. Useful information may be obtained on how to improve the job or find more cost effective ways to do the work in the future.
- Prepare a revised job description and person specification.
- Identify potential problem areas, for example around working relationships or working conditions.
- Secure the employee's goodwill so they leave feeling positive about the Council.

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that feedback is directed to relevant areas. A copy of all Exit Questionnaire Forms will be retained in HR for wider analysis.

6. Establishing Whether a Vacancy Exists

A vacancy could arise because:

- A previous post-holder has resigned. Remember that it does not necessarily follow that a vacancy is created simply because the existing post-holder has resigned.
- It is identified that a new post needs to be established.
- A restructure is taking place.

Regardless of whether a potential vacancy is already established or not, the line manager, or an appropriate senior manager, should assess whether the post needs to be filled by considering the broader context. This should include:

- Impact of any existing restructuring, in the service area or elsewhere in the Council, for example around shared services.
- Current and future service needs.
- External drivers impacting on service area.
- Budgets, efficiency savings.
- Workforce development plan.
- Existing establishment and staffing capacity.

Before you decide to recruit consider whether the work is permanent or short term in nature. Short term work demands could be covered by one of the following options:

- There may be redeployees on a redeployment list who would be available for a placement. (refer to redeployment policy)
- Offering additional hours to part-time staff or overtime to full time staff, for example to cover staff absence or demands from seasonal trends. Bear in mind the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.
- There is provision to reward employees who temporarily operate at a level and/or standard of performance, or make a contribution, which is outside the normal requirements of their substantive post. Further information about payments can be found in the Employee Handbook.

If it is accepted that there is a need to recruit, a job analysis should be undertaken. This will:

- Inform any changes that need to be made to an existing job description and person specification. The post will have to be re-evaluated if changes are made to the principle responsibilities.
- Be a starting point for developing the job description and person specification for a new post. The post will then have to be evaluated and approved before it is added to the establishment.

N. B. If there has been a recent recruitment process for the post i.e. within the last six months, subject to there being an appropriate candidate you may use the next suitable candidate rather than re –advertising the post.

More information on job analysis follows in paragraph 10.

7. Disestablished Posts

It may be identified that an established post is no longer required. If the post is filled at the time, then consultation must take place between the individual affected and the Trade Union. An employee whose post has been disestablished and as a consequence is at risk of redundancy will be dealt with in line with the redeployment policy and procedure. The manager must ensure HR is notified and involved as necessary.

A report, containing reasons and budgetary implications, will have to be submitted to the **Management Team**. If this is approved, a copy of the report needs to be submitted to HR. In the event that the post is being replaced by one of a different nature and grade, or is subject to a restructure, then approval should be sought in the same report. Advice is available from HR.

8. Convene Selection Panel

Where a vacancy does exist the next stage is to convene the selection panel. The line manager will be the Chair of the selection panel and is responsible for convening the other panel members, who can consist of:

- Another manager from the service area.
- A team member, provided they are more senior than the vacancy.
- A new manager from elsewhere in the department who is looking for experience in recruitment and selection.
- A member of HR. (If HR has not already been involved, the Chair should notify them at this stage since they are required to be involved in around 10% of recruitment and selection activities for quality assurance purposes. If the panel members are inexperienced then HR must be represented on the panel).
- An external partner or adviser with particular expertise or interest who can add value to the panel, for example where the vacancy requires language skills or medical knowledge.

When selecting panel members the Chair should aim to convene a diverse panel. Whilst the Council recognises that every employee is an individual it is, nevertheless, good practice for the panel to represent diversity. This could involve panel members from different backgrounds, of different gender or with disabilities.

All panel members should have attended the recruitment and selection, skills training course, and, if necessary, refresher training. (see section 2.2 for possible exceptions)

A selection panel member is required to do far more than just turn up at an interview. The Chair of the panel will take the lead role in the process, however the other panel members should be available to help out at all stages of the process, in particular:

- Planning the process, agreeing timescales and dates for selection activities.
- Agreeing the assessment methods stated on the person specification so that all panel members are clear about what they are assessing and how to gather the evidence.
- Assessing applicants in accordance with the methods agreed.
- Each panel member makes an independent decision before selecting a candidate in agreement with the other panel members.

9. Equality Targets

The purpose of equality targets is to strive to recruit a diverse workforce that generally reflects the local population. The targets are:

Race	*5.5% of the workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds.
Gender	*26.25% of senior staff to be women.
Disability	*7.5% of the workforce consisting of people with disabilities.

*If using a hardcopy of this document please check Hytranet copy to see if there has been any change.

Each manager should be aware of how their own department and service area are progressing towards the targets. Compare the targets above to the make-up of your team or service area. If there has been no recent progress to the target, consider the reasons for this. Are there any development needs for yourself or others involved in recruitment in your area?

Development needs could include:

- Equality training.
- Recruitment and Selection Refresher.

Development in this area can help selection panel members to consider how their own values, beliefs and attitudes impact on selection decisions, for example by selecting 'in your own image'.

Development needs can be addressed in many ways, for example training courses, reading, research, coaching, mentoring, e-learning. Contact HR for further advice and availability of courses.

10. Job Analysis

It is important to invest time in gathering information about the nature of the job, **whether it is an existing post or a new post**. You will need to establish:

- The purpose of the post in relation to current and future needs of the service.
- The external and internal drivers for a new post.
- The job content – Tasks and duties, levels of responsibility, importance, frequency.
- The outputs required quantities, performance standards, deadlines.
- Quality standards.
- Relationships – Reporting, accountability, responsibility for others, internal and external customers and clients, other team members.
- Working conditions – Working with others or alone, times needed physical environment.
- Whether it is an essential requirement of the post for the employee to use a car for business purposes.

- How the post fits into the structure – Department, section, location, job title.
- How an existing post may have changed.
- The skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the role.
- The number of hours per week needed to undertake the duties.

The information can be gathered from:

- Exit Questionnaire and discussions with the previous post-holder.
- Observing and consulting with the team.
- Questionnaires or interviewing the team members, other managers, customers, clients or other sections.
- Existing work diaries or procedure notes.
- Existing job description and person specification.
- Service Plan and Corporate Action Plan.
- Budgetary information.

The job analysis will form the basis of a job description and person specification.

11. Producing the Job Description and Person Specification

Templates are available for job descriptions and person specifications (see [hyntranet](#)). Ensure that you complete all sections of the templates.

They should be written in plain language, without jargon, management speak or acronyms. Ensure that the language used can clearly be understood by an external candidate as well as an internal one. Use active language rather than passive as this reinforces the level of responsibility that the post-holder will have.

Competencies specified in NVQ and management standards are often appropriate to use in job descriptions and person specifications. Contact HR to find out if this would be appropriate in your area and if a framework already exists.

When you have completed the job description and person specification, review them and check that they reflect the requirements of the post. Put yourself in the place of a potential applicant. Does the job sound interesting? Would it motivate you to apply? Would it help you to prepare? Does the person specification make it too onerous to apply? Also ask HR to review the job description and person specification.

Dos and Don'ts when preparing the job description and person specification

Do:

- Remember the duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to posts where necessary. Think creatively about how duties could be done rather than how they have always been done in the past.
- Ensure you enter the correct, evaluated, Grade for the post on the job description.
- Check that the person specification relates to the job description.
- Check that each item on the person specification is valid and justifiable.
- Restrict the number of criteria to ten wherever possible.
- Ensure there are a variety of appropriate assessment methods.

Don't:

- Be tempted to repeat the statements of the job description with “able to” in front. This is not the correct way to write a person specification.

- Include requirements that discriminate against candidates.
- Include criteria about attitude or personality. Instead analyse the competency requirements.
- Be tempted to assess all the criteria by application form and interview. Pick and choose the most appropriate methods.

12. Writing the Job Description

The job description is a series of concise, clear statements about the duties and tasks that need to be undertaken to do the job and it is prepared following the job analysis by the line manager. Regardless of the professional area or level of responsibility, it is good practice to ensure that the job description is no more than two pages long, This keeps it focused, clear and attractive to potential applicants.

Where appropriate the job description must make reference to responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

When writing the main duties it is not necessary to include every task a person may have to carry out. The individual will get to know the detail about what is expected in the job as part of their induction process. However you should include outputs and the standards of performance required, including behavioural standards.

The job description is an important document and sufficient time needs to be spent to ensure it accurately represents the post since:

- It will be used to develop the person specification and identify the knowledge, skills and competencies required to perform the role effectively.
- Applicants will base their decision on whether to apply for the post on the job description. If the job description gives an incorrect impression of the post this could result in quicker labour turnover, incapability issues or employee relations issues.
- It forms part of the Contract of Employment and communicates expectations about standards to help ensure effective performance in the job.
- Applicants and post-holders need to know what is expected of them when they are in post.

Salary Range

In relation to the grade of the post:

- If no changes are made to the job description of an existing post the salary range will remain the same.
- If a new post is created or the principle responsibilities of an existing job description are changed **then a job evaluation will need to take place to establish the grade of the post..**

13. Writing the Person Specification

13.1 Introduction

The person specification encompasses the knowledge, skills, abilities, qualifications, training and experiences which are required in order to perform the job role effectively. When considering what to include on the person specification, look at each task on the job description and assess what is required in order for it to be performed effectively.

The person specification is an important document because it:

- Clarifies the criteria required, enabling a potential applicant to self assess and decide if they want to apply.
- Is a basis for assessing someone's ability to do the job during selection activities.
- Shows the applicants the methods that will be used to assess them.
- Enables the panel(s) to assess fairly and objectively.
- Can contribute to identifying development needs of the post-holder.

The line manager is responsible for producing or reviewing the person specification, however it is recommended that all the selection panel members agree on how each item will be assessed. This is so that all panel members understand and agree on the criteria on the person specification and it prevents individual panel members using a different priority or emphasis for assessing candidates.

The person specification should include appropriate and specific references to suitability to work with children, including any corporately agreed competencies. A risk assessment should be conducted for any post where the post holder will have contact i.e children/ vulnerable adults to establish what the level of checks required. If it is an established post that has already been risk assessed then the previous assessment can be used. (refer to risk assessment form).

It is recommended that the person specification should contain no more than ten criteria in order to keep it focused, clear and attractive to potential applicants. A lengthy person specification means that applicants must write lengthy application forms, potentially discouraging them from applying. All the criteria must be clear, valid, job related and measurable.

Only include criteria that are necessary for effective performance so that you do not indirectly discriminate against any groups. Do not include criteria simply because they represent how the job was carried out in the past. You may need to think laterally and consider alternative methods of conducting tasks, for example to enable a successful disabled candidate to undertake the duties. When writing criteria, take into account that applicants will learn on the job.

13.2 Skills and Abilities

What skills and abilities are needed in order to carry out a particular task? Decide on:

- Which generic skills or abilities are required.
- Which specialised skills or competencies are required.
- How the skills and abilities will be applied in the post.
- Whether it is something that can easily be learned once the employee starts work.

There are certain **generic skills and abilities** that the Council recognises are required for most posts. Examples of these could include:

Skill	Assess	Example
Communication Skills	Who will the person need to communicate with and how, e.g. face to face, in writing?	An ability to communicate both orally and in writing with members of the public and team members.
Keyboard Skills	Will they be required to type a minimum number of words per minute? What level of accuracy is required?	Demonstrate keyboard skills in order to type letters and send electronic mail.
Team Skills	Who will the person work with relevant to job context?	Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative within the team.

Priorities and Deadlines	Will they prioritise their own work? What deadlines are there?	Ability to prioritise own workload and work to deadlines to ensure an efficient service to the public.
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Other generic skills that might apply include:

- Numeracy.
- Organisational skills.
- Problem solving.
- Managerial or supervisory skills.
- Computer skills.

There will also be many jobs that require **specialist skills and abilities**, in order for the job to be done effectively, for example professional roles. For example:

- An Environmental Health Officer will be required to demonstrate enforcement skills in the preparation and presentation of court cases.
- A lawyer will be required to have advocacy skills.

13.3 Knowledge

What does a person need to **know** in order to do the job? Assess whether they need any knowledge on the start date. If they can acquire what they need to know through induction training and on-the-job experience then that knowledge is not an essential requirement. Avoid asking for knowledge of Council policies as this places external candidates at a disadvantage.

Examples of **knowledge** requirements:

Post	Knowledge Requirements
HR Officer	Current legislation concerning Employment Law.
Licensing Officer	Current legislation concerning Licensing Laws.

13.4 Experience

This area should be applied cautiously in order to comply with age discrimination legislation and the Corporate Equality Policy. It is unacceptable to use age related criteria, unless there are other legal reasons for doing so, for example a driver. You must not use words such as “young”.

Asking for a minimum number of years experience in a particular area can be discriminatory, for example against young people or parents who have taken a career break to care for children.

Rather than request a certain number of years experience, translate this into skills and abilities. As an example, consider how you would apply criteria asking for three years experience dealing with customers. You may be able to short-list applicants who give examples about where they have worked dealing with customers. However this does not necessarily mean that they are effective when dealing with customers. Always connect experiences to ability and include further assessment at the next stage of the selection process.

In the above example, instead of asking for **experience** of dealing with customers face-to-face and on the telephone, consider asking for an **ability** to deal with customers in a courteous and helpful manner.

Also remember that experience outside of paid employment can be valuable. For example, managing a household may be similar in some respects to the skills needed for posts which require organisational, numeracy and management skills.

13.5 Qualifications

Qualifications are often an indication of an applicant's capabilities but care must be taken not to deter applicants who have the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge but not the required qualification. Ask yourself what skills and knowledge this qualification gives, whether there are other ways that they can be acquired and what the relevance of the qualification is to the post. Think realistically whether it is necessary to ask for a level of education.

There will be posts where a professional qualification is required, for example a solicitor, Environmental Health Officer, Planner or engineer.

In cases where a qualification is required you should ask for the qualification **or equivalent**. This will ensure that you do not discriminate against someone who was not educated in the U.K. In these cases you will need to check whether a qualification offered as an equivalent is at the appropriate level.

Where a qualification is necessary to carry out the full level of duties, you could increase the number of potential applicants by stating that the post-holder will be supported to study to attain this. You will need to check whether candidates are willing to study and make it clear what will happen if they do not achieve the qualification, for example by placing a bar on progression through the salary points.

13.6 Training

Here you may want to suggest certain training that is either required or the person is expected to have, for example someone working towards an NVQ in a trainee or career graded post.

13.7 Additional Information

When considering additional information look at the demands of the job, for example:

- Required to work until 7.30pm on a Thursday night, on a rota basis.
- Required to enter confined spaces in order to carry out inspections.
- Able to work weekends on a rota basis.
- Comply with no smoking policy.

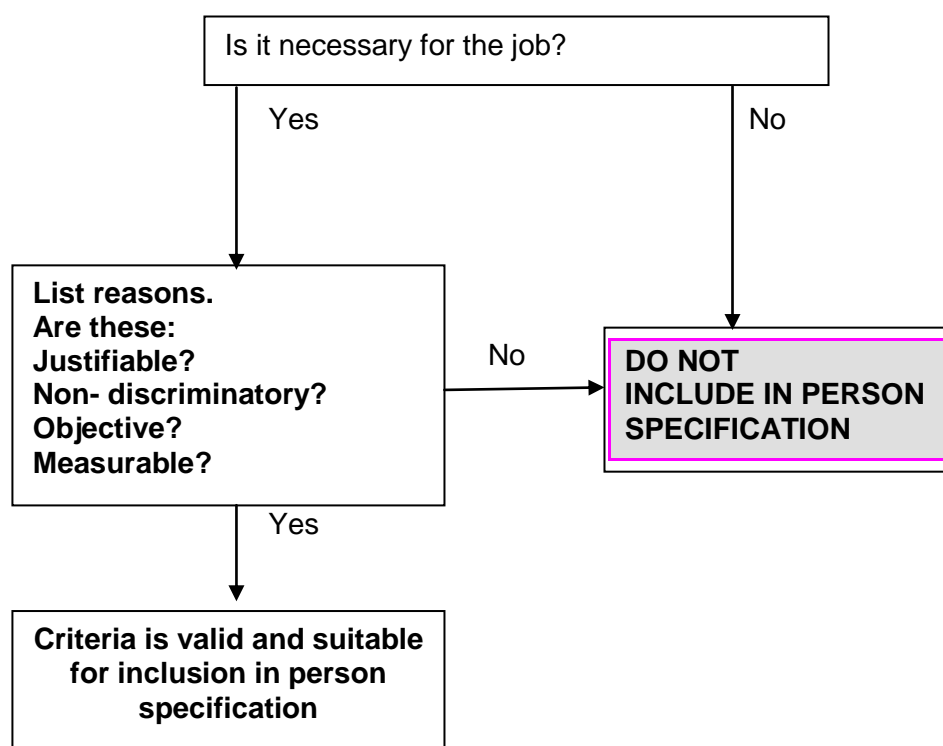
Completion of this section of the person specification means that the panel can ask candidates if they can work within the work related circumstances. It does not mean that the panel are permitted to ask candidates about their personal or family circumstances or responsibilities.

Before stating that a driving licence is necessary consider whether there are other methods of transport that could be used. This is an area where the Council could be accused of discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act.

13.8 Checking the person specification

Now that you have written your person specification, use the following flowchart to assess its suitability and validity.

Consider Each of the Criteria in Turn



14. Methods of Assessment

For each of the criteria in the person specification you will need to specify the **method of assessment**. This reinforces the importance of the person specification as a key part of the process. If you get this wrong, it will affect the ability of the panel to assess and select the best person for the job. Think differently and be creative about the way you select candidates but stay within the parameters of the Council's commitment to, and accountability for, fair and transparent processes. The most common methods of assessment currently used are listed below and further information follows in the next paragraphs.

• Shortlisting Applications
• Interviews
• Work related assessment

14.1 Short-listing from application forms

This method is, in most cases, used as the first stage in the selection process. It is appropriate for many jobs, however if a job does not involve any written skills you may want to consider another method. Avoid asking for **all** the criteria to be addressed at this stage as it could be off-putting for potential applicants. Posts which are difficult to recruit to should make the first stage of assessment in particular as straightforward as possible for applicants.

If it is likely that you will have too many applicants who meet the criteria, then you can choose one of the following alternatives to help with short-listing. Ensure the methods are applied at a level appropriate to the level of the job and that the person specification makes it clear that you will be using one of the methods if necessary.

- (i) Weighting – You can state on the person specification that, where there are too many candidates who meet the criteria, a weighting system will be introduced. Weight skills and competencies in order of priority, for example:

Communication Skills	x	3	(Weight as the most important)
Organisational Skills	x	2	(2 nd most important)
Numeracy Skills	x	1	(3 rd most important)

Score the responses given in the application form in the usual way then multiply the score against the weight as agreed.

You must indicate on the person specification which criteria may be subject to higher weighting depending on the number of applicants.

- (ii) Additional submission – Ask candidates to answer a question, a series of questions or a scenario about one or more of the criteria, for example “Tell us how you would deal with a customer complaint”. Check your questions and liaise with HR to ensure question sheets and clear instructions are included in the application packs.

14.2 Interviews

Interviews are suitable for gathering evidence by checking candidates' understanding and asking for examples of past experiences or of how they would deal with a particular situation. They are also a good opportunity to meet candidates and introduce them to the Council and the role. However in most cases it is essential to back up what candidates tell you by using another method of assessment, such as by conducting a work related test which is directly relevant to the job role.

14.3 Work Related Assessment

These are a good way of gathering evidence about on-the-job performance. They can test technical skills or behavioural competencies. Examples include:

Summary of criteria	Examples of how tested
IT literacy	Ask candidates to produce a document, save, print.
Typing	Typing test assessing words per minute and accuracy.
Numeracy	Calculation similar to one required in the job, e.g. percentages, VAT, Council Tax discount.
Presentation skills	Give candidates a week to prepare a presentation on a work related topic. This can be combined with other criteria, for example planning, organising or research. Alternatively give them the presentation on arrival to assess their ability to assimilate information and deliver a message pitched appropriately.
Telephone skills	Role play, for example dealing with a difficult customer on the telephone.
Prioritising, problem solving or delegating.	In tray exercise.
Professional knowledge	Written questions, scenarios or case studies.

The most effective test will directly represent a task involved in the job role, for example using a spreadsheet based on one used in the working environment. Tests are normally time restricted. Ask a team member, who is in a similar role or at a similar level to the vacant post, to try out the test beforehand to ensure the timescale is realistic and the instructions are clear.

You will need to decide in advance how you will score the test, taking into account the person specification criteria you are testing.

Ensure that the design of the test does not discriminate against candidates who do not currently work for the Council by assuming prior knowledge of Council procedures, working practices or technology.

It may be appropriate for some tests to be conducted during the interview, for example a presentation. Other tests will take place either just before or just after the interview. In these cases you will need to arrange a suitable venue, provide the necessary resources, for example computer, paper, pens, calculator, and arrange for someone to administer the tests.

Inform HR if you are using a test. They will check the scoring and ensure the test is not discriminatory in any way.

14.4 Assessment centre

Assessment centres consist of several exercises assessing skills and competencies, designed around the relevant person specification criteria. Research has shown that well-designed assessment centres with a variety of activities can reach 0.8 predictive validity in assessing future performance (CIPD).

The exercises should reflect and simulate the post in terms of both content and context. Exercises include:

- Group exercises
- Presentations
- In-tray exercises

- Report writing
- One-to-one exercises
- Management scenarios

The purpose of using a variety of assessment exercises is to provide different opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their skills and abilities to carry out the duties of the post.

HR manages assessment centres for Chief Officer and Senior Manager vacancies. If you would like to hold an assessment centre for a Team Leader or other vacancies then speak to HR. They can advise you who is trained to develop exercises and assess candidates.

Assessment centres require significant resources in terms of assessors, administration, venues and materials. It is important therefore that the assessment centre is cost effective and provides added value. In order to ensure this, the person specification must accurately represent the skills and competencies needed for the post so that the assessors are gathering evidence about the relevant criteria. You will need to spend time preparing beforehand with the assessors to ensure the exercises are relevant and will generate the evidence required. It will also be important to ensure that all selection panel members are committed to the process and are prepared to consider the feedback, evidence and recommendations made by the assessors.

14.5 Telephone interviews

Before you start planning telephone interviews, contact HR to confirm that this approach is valid and to discuss how this will work and what training, if any is needed.

Telephone interviews can be used to assess the telephone manner and skills of applicants and therefore can be useful in areas where these skills are important, for example in customer services.

Telephone interviews can be used as a short-listing tool, for example as an alternative to screening large numbers of application forms where a high response is expected. You will need to specify which criteria from the person specification are going to be assessed during the telephone interview as well as work related circumstances, such as whether they are able to work certain shift patterns.

Assessment decisions made by one individual are not allowed. This means that the verbal responses to the questions will have to be assessed by at least two selection panel members, individually first then in discussion with each other once all interviews are finished. The selection panel should agree standard answers in advance to help with scoring.

If you are using telephone interviews as an alternative to application forms, you will need to agree methods of collecting personal details and Valuing Diversity Monitoring information with the HR. You will also need a method of informing the applicant which person specification criteria will be assessed during the telephone interview. Solutions include:

- Publishing the information in the advert or directing applicants to information on the website.
- Taking personal details when applicants ring up and arranging an appointment time to ring them back and conduct the interview. The information can then be sent to them in the meantime.

14.6 Psychometric test

It is recommended that work related tests (as described above) are used rather than personality tests. If you are interested in finding out more about personality tests, speak to HR who can put you in touch with a qualified practitioner. This will ensure that, if you go ahead, tests chosen have been validated to be free of any cultural bias and are appropriate to the person specification. Please note there will be additional costs incurred.

15. Deciding Assessment Methods

The following principles will help you to choose the most appropriate and fair assessment methods.

- **Choose methods of assessment that relate to the skills, abilities and knowledge that are required to carry out the duties of the job**, for example telephone interviews for call centre posts or practical tests for posts requiring physical skills such as cleaners and refuse collectors.
- Do not use assessment methods that are unrelated to the job. For example, don't ask candidates to do a presentation if they will not be required to present information to groups in their job.
- It is recommended that at least two, but ideally three methods of assessment need to be applied to any person specification. This increases the validity of the recruitment process. It also allows candidates to demonstrate skills, abilities and knowledge in different ways. This will give candidates more opportunity to demonstrate their suitability. Additional methods improve the quality and quantity of information on which to base a selection decision.
- The selection panel should agree on appropriate assessment methods and an appropriate number of methods, depending on the criteria, the job level and the anticipated number of applicants.
- Carefully consider how each of the skills, abilities and knowledge items can be best measured. Remember that an applicant has to be able to demonstrate how they meet each of the criteria through the selection method specified.
- Some items can easily be assessed from the application form, however other items will need to be assessed using alternative methods, or a combination of methods.
- You **must** clearly state on the person specification the methods of assessment which will be used to assess each item. You will not be able to change your mind or introduce new methods of assessment part way through the process, even if you intend to notify candidates of the changes.
- Ensure all the methods of assessment are measurable, valid, reliable, justifiable and fair in terms of genuinely testing a person's suitability for the post and that they do not discriminate against individuals or groups of applicants. The methods of assessment must not discriminate on the grounds of:
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Gender re-assignment

- Religion or belief
- Age
- When deciding assessment methods, remember that you may be required to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of a disabled applicant.

16. Approval for a New Post

At this stage, if the post is new to your establishment, you must apply for approval from the Head of Service or Chief Officer followed by the Managing Director. The process is as follows:

- **New posts must be job evaluated via HR before they are submitted for approval.** To do this you will need to complete job description, person specification and additional information and submit this to HR who will arrange for the job evaluation to take place. Ensure you have allowed sufficient time for the post to be evaluated.
- Complete a VAC1 form (see Hyntranet or HR) for your Head of Service/ Chief Officer to authorise, outlining the background to the need for the new post, the budgetary implications and any other relevant information. Include details if the new post is part of a restructure or funded from a disestablished post. If it is a fixed term contract specify the duration and how the post is funded. Submit the form with the job description (stating the evaluated grade) and person specification to the Managing Director via HR.
- If approval is received from the Managing Director for your service area. HR will inform you of the outcome and arrange proceeding with the new post in line with the Managing Director's conditions.
- **It is essential that you keep HR advised of developments as they are responsible for updating the establishment on the structure charts once approval is obtained. Without the VAC1 form your vacancy will not be accepted by HR for advertising.**

17. Attracting Applications

The Advertising Process

Once approval has been granted, you will be ready to advertise your post. You should already have passed the Vac 1 Form to HR with the job description, person specification and advert. Specifying where you want the vacancy advertised. It is preferred that all documents are sent electronically and in word format.

Remember that the advert, job description and person specification all make up part of the contract of employment for the successful candidate. It is important therefore to accurately represent the job. Losing a new starter because the job is not what they expected is unfair to them and will have implications in terms of cost and time if you have to undertake the recruitment and selection exercise again.

When HR receives your documents they will check them and assess whether any redeployees may be eligible to apply. If this is the case you will interview any redeployees that apply. HR will only submit the paperwork for advertising if the redeployees are unsuccessful. Consult the **Redeployment Policy** for more information.

You will need to build in sufficient time to allow for deadlines that have to be met by HR (including advertising deadlines set by publications). **You will need to allow time for HR to check your documentation and deal with any queries. Remember that, depending on the publication, you may need to submit your documents up to four weeks before the advertisement date.**

Think about the timing of your advert. Avoid advertising around Bank Holidays. HR will be able to advise you about publication deadlines and the most appropriate days to advertise your post.

17.2 Where to Place the Advert

You will need to consider the best way to generate a pool of applicants for the vacancy you have, taking into account:

- Past experience of good or poor responses to adverts.
- Posts which have been difficult to recruit to in the past. In these instances you will need to consider the most effective methods of accessing your labour market.
- Resources available and the costs of adverts.
- The current composition of the workforce as if any of the Equality Target Groups are under represented appropriate media to attract these groups should be considered.

Advice is available from HR. They can also help you to access advice from the recruitment advertising agency used by the Council to place adverts. They can give advice on where to place an advertisement..

Various recruitment methods are considered below.

Please note that using word of mouth only as a recruitment method is not permitted for any Council vacancy.

Internal only adverts

You must gain approval from the Head of Human Resources if you want to advertise internally only. This will probably only be appropriate for short term contracts or secondments, where you could not justify the external advertising expense, or for time-limited contracts for funded posts.

External advertisement

- **Local Publications**
The most common publications for external adverts are the Lancashire Evening Telegraph and Accrington Observer.
- **National Newspapers**
Adverts in national newspapers may only be appropriate for Chief Officer and senior professional positions, due to the high costs involved and the national target audience. HR will be able to advise on the most appropriate newspaper and day depending on the nature of the vacancy.

- **Professional Magazines**
If your vacancy is in a professional area, such as engineers, ICT, Human Resources or Accountancy etc, then it may be appropriate to advertise in a relevant professional journal. Although these adverts are usually high cost, they can often be justified as they provide access to a good target audience.
- **Specialist Media**
Can improve access to difficult to reach groups and attract applications from these groups. HR can give advice on which publications are available and appropriate.
- **Internet**
E-recruitment is the fastest growing medium and has a growing audience. It is much cheaper than advertising in newspapers and magazines and research (CIPD) shows that it has overtaken the traditional methods in terms of effectiveness. Consider providing signposts in more expensive media directing potential applicants to the web site.

All vacancies are advertised on our Website and currently they are also advertised using more traditional methods. Where possible save costs by simplifying and reducing the size of adverts placed elsewhere by providing minimal, essential information about the job and signposting potential applicants to the website.

- **Job Centres**
The local job centres are more effective in attracting people for lower paid posts. They also interlink with other centres within the area. Job centres hold job fairs periodically and, if the timing is right, they can be useful as they often involve other local businesses and therefore can attract many potential applicants.
- **Radio**
Radio advertising is expensive and may not reach the audience that you wish to target. Radio campaigns are likely to only be useful if you are launching a campaign, for example targeting particular sections of the community or introducing a new service which has staffing implications in large numbers.
- **Schools, Colleges and Universities**
These are useful for raising the profile of the types of posts and opportunities available in the Council. Consider this as a supplementary method of advertising where your service area is under-represented by young people, or for Modern Apprenticeships or Graduate Trainee vacancies.
- **Job Fairs**
Job fairs can be used to attract applications for vacancies that are current at the time of the fair, and can also make future applicants aware of the range of jobs and opportunities available in the Council. However, the timing of job fairs is often dictated by external partners. You will need to make sure job fairs are appropriately advertised to generate sufficient interest to justify the resources needed to hold the event.
- **Open Days**
Open days may be useful for filling multiple vacancies of the same job type, for example waste services staff. It is possible for selection activities to take place on the day and relate to the skills necessary on the job. You will need to make special arrangements for capturing applicants' personal details and monitoring information. You will need to advertise the open day appropriately depending on the job type.
- **Posters**
Existing outlets within departments, for example sports centres, voluntary organisations and other offices, can be used in conjunction with other advertising methods to advertise

locally based vacancies or to promote specific messages such as welcoming applications from specific groups within the community.

- Other media
Other media are available, e.g. local newsagents, and may be appropriate in particular circumstances. HR can provide advice if this is appropriate.

17.3 The Advert Text

The aim of your advert is to attract high quality applicants and promote the Council. To do this you will need to sell the benefits to potential applicants of working in the post and for Hyndburn Borough Council.

Before you write the advert you will need to conduct some research:

- What do your target audience look for in a job? Do research internally by asking an existing post holder or team member or check out recent adverts that you have seen for similar posts in other organisations. You could ask what response the organisation had.
- Remind yourself about what skills and knowledge you are looking for.
- What do you want them to do?
- Why should they apply?
- How easy is it for them to apply? What will motivate them into action?
- When will interviews be held? Avoid major religious festivals

In terms of content you will need to include:

- An attention grabbing headline – what is unique to your job that will motivate and enthuse people to apply? Be creative within the Council's agreed branding style.
- Job title.
- Reward package. Include the salary range and other benefits to attract applicants. This could include details about the pension scheme, annual leave, essential car allowance, development opportunities, flexi-time, job share or whether home working can be offered. Particularly in a tight labour market you will need to find ways of attracting attention to your job.
- Job tenure (permanent or length of fixed term contract).
- The outline requirements or main purpose of the job. Don't waste space, and money, stating obvious points, for example a clerical post required to do filing. Instead be creative and think about what it is about the post that will attract applicants to apply.
- A short summary of the essential criteria (skills, knowledge and qualifications) that you expect job applicants to have.
- For more senior posts include information about the nature of the activities of the service area and the vision or strategy.
- Appropriate references to the Council's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as well as the need for any pre-employment checks.
- Job location (state if varied).
- Date of interviews, if possible as makes it easier for candidates to plan.

When writing the advert text, remember:

- Keep the text simple and clear. Check it when you have finished. Can it be shortened? Don't state the obvious or duplicate information – this serves no purpose and will increase the overall cost.
- Sell the job and the service area realistically.
- Ensure that the advertisement appeals to all sections of the community using positive visual images or wording. The advert should not be discriminatory, offensive or in any way off-putting to any person or group.
- In the event that one or more of the equality target groups are under represented in the workforce, the advert can state that applications from this group or groups would be welcome.

- Use active sentences and avoid jargon or abbreviations.
- Make it clear in the advertisement what is required. Candidates do not want to get an application form and find they cannot apply.
- Seek guidance from HR if Genuine Occupational Requirements apply to the post. If there is a legal reason why the post-holder must be of a particular race or gender then you will need to make reference to the relevant legislation in the advert.

You may need to develop two versions of your advert text if you are aiming to keep costs down by reducing the size of your newspaper advert. You will need to develop a full version for posting on the Hyndburn Borough Council website. A shortened version, for the newspaper, should simply attract the attention of the audience in some way and signpost them to the website or a telephone contact for further information.

HR will add the appropriate corporate statements such as the Hyndburn brand, encouraging under-represented groups to apply, where to obtain application packs and who to contact for further information about the job.

Informal chats about the job can be useful in helping applicants to prepare for selection. However, these basic principles should be followed:

- The contact person **must** not be a member of the selection panel, as subjective judgements about the person could be made during a conversation.
- The contact person **must** be the same for all informal chats with potential applicants.
- The contact person **must not** talk to the selection panel members about potential applicants they have spoken to.

18. Redeployment Procedure

HR sends details of appropriate vacancies, to all employees on the Redeployment List. This takes place before a vacancy is advertised. If a redeployee expresses an interest in a post of a similar grade, (ie, not more than one grade above or below the grade of an employee's current post and as detailed in the Council's Redeployment Policy & Procedure), then the vacancy advert is put on hold and HR will advise the manager. The vacancy will only be advertised if the post is not subsequently filled by a redeployee. At all times HR are available to provide advice and guidance to managers on the Redeployment Procedure.

The redeployee must then submit an application form for short-listing purposes. Managers should recognise that redeployees may not completely match the criteria in the person specification. However, special consideration should be given to potential suitability. Intensive training and support may mean that they can acquire the necessary skills and knowledge during the agreed trial period. This does not mean that appointments should be made beyond the redeployee's capabilities. This is unfair to the redeployee, the other team members and the line manager. It could create additional anxiety for the redeployee at an already difficult time.

Short-listed redeployees will be interviewed and an appointment made where an individual demonstrates that they satisfy the requirements of the post, or have the potential to do so with training and support within a reasonable period.

All posts are subject to a four week trial period during which there should be an agreed training and support plan. There will be regular reviews with the line manager and HR. The trial period can be extended in certain circumstances, for example if an individual takes annual leave during the period and misses some training. A decision on whether the position will be made permanent will be made at the end of the trial period.

Further information is contained in the Redeployment Policy & Procedure, or contact HR.

19. Selection

19.1 Introduction

You will need to demonstrate fairness in the processes you use and you must keep records as evidence of the processes and decisions. Remember that all documentation relating to the recruitment and selection process is confidential and must be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act where applicable.

When preparing the person specification you will have decided which selection methods to use. Refer back to your person specification to ensure you are using the correct assessment method for each of the criteria specified.

All applications forms are submitted to HR, the applications will be logged and Equality forms and personal details are removed. The applications will be copied forwarded to the selection panel along with associated paperwork.

19.2 Short-listing from application forms

As close as possible to the day after the closing date you can collect application forms from HR. (where a high number of applications are received, preparing the application forms for collection may take longer Late application forms should only be accepted if short-listing has not already taken place and all selection panel members agree to accept the reasons for the late application.

A selection panel member should stand down from the process if a member of their family, or a close friend, applies for the post. They should declare this to the other panel members as soon as they are aware of the situation. It is the responsibility of the Chair to replace the panel member.

Each selection panel member must individually read each application form and assess the relevant person specification criteria. Short listing forms are available, from the Hyntranet, for each panel member to record their assessment. The only factors which should be taken into account are those on the person specification. **Personal details with no relevance to the person specification should be ignored, for example school attended, address, interests, clubs.** You may however, use personal details that do relate to the person specification, for example activities undertaken as treasurer of a club may have relevance when assessing numeracy skills.

Short listing must be carried out in a systematic and objective way, to ascertain which applicants appear to meet the requirement outlined in both documents. It is important not to make assumptions but to test on facts.

The criteria which can be assessed at short listing (e.g., qualifications, extent of experience etc) will be entered on the "short listing sheet". Both essential and desirable criteria will be entered if used. Criteria to be assessed at interview should not be transferred to the short listing sheet.

The short listing panel will assess each applicant against these criteria and complete the form accordingly. If an applicant does not meet any one of the essential short listing criteria he/she will not be short listed. However, all candidates must be assessed against each of the criteria.

Only applicants who meet all of the essential criteria may be short listed. If a large number meet the entire essential, the desirable criteria should be considered. Depending on numbers the shortlist may include those who also meet all the desirable, or certain specific desirable criteria which have priority. The important thing is consistency. So if you decide only to shortlist those who meet a certain number of the desirable criteria, you must apply this to all applicants. Any criteria you use must be in the original person specification and be job related.

All internal applicants who meet the essential criteria will be offered an interview.

It is important any decisions made are noted on the short listing form. If an applicant requests feedback on their application, it must be clear from the form exactly what criteria was used and why some applicants were not short listed.

When all panel members have short-listed individually, they must meet and discuss their results, challenging assumptions and deliberating over discrepancies. The final decision reached about which candidates are short-listed must be recorded on the form.

Whilst scrutinising the application form, use the opportunity to make a note of any discrepancies or anomalies, for example any gaps in employment history. These can be checked at the interview stage. It will be particularly important to do this for posts involving working with children.

Shortlisting People with a Disability.

All disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the job will be guaranteed an interview. It is important, therefore, that you check on the application forms to find out which applicants have stated that they are disabled.

You may also need to make reasonable adjustments to the selection process. These could include:

- Using a venue with good access.
- Ensuring furniture is suitable with no unnecessary obstacles.
- Amending your materials if tests are to be administered.
- Ensure written or printed material is easy to read, for example in a large font. Ensure good colour contrast between typeface and background by using black on white or pale yellow paper. Also:
 - Avoid italics or other elaborate scripts.
 - Do not print text in capital letters.
 - Use short sentences, paragraphs and extra line spacing.
 - Use left justification.
 - Offer alternative formats, for example taped translations of printed material or Braille versions.

Other considerations include:

- Have an access audit done of your public access areas.
- Advise frontline staff of the whereabouts of accessible toilets near their workspace and their duty to direct service users and visitors.
- Advise frontline staff of their duty to check out the evacuation plan for their area for disabled visitors.
- Identify where guide-dog users can rest their dogs and have water available for the dog.

In addition to the selection process you will need to consider making reasonable adjustments to the post, for example if the location of the vacancy has poor access. It is illegal to discriminate against disabled applicants because you know that the workplace would cause access difficulties for a successful candidate.

Further advice is available from your HR.

Inviting candidates to the next stage

The selection panel should agree their short-list so that the Chair can inform HR within four weeks of the closing date and provide the information necessary to invite candidates to the

next stage of the selection process. HR requires this information seven working days prior to the date of the interview or other selection activity.

HR will require you to e-mail their mailbox with the following information:

- The application form numbers of short-listed candidates.
- The post title and reference number.
- The interview dates and times for each candidate.
- The address of the venue with access details and who to report to on the day of the interview.
- The selection methods, for example interview, typing test, presentation and a brief description of what any tests will be about.
- Information to be sent with the letter, for example the presentation brief and equipment available.
- Arrangements for candidates who have stated that they have special needs.

Application packs state that applicants should assume that they are unsuccessful if they are not contacted within four weeks of the closing date, therefore letters are not sent to applicants who are not short-listed.

It is the Chair's responsibility to:

- Liaise as appropriate with HR, selection panel members, HR and staff administering tests.
- Book a venue.
- Ensure that there are reception and waiting facilities, including ensuring that reception staff have candidates' names.
- Book refreshments for the panel, if appropriate.
- Ensure that expense claim forms are available.
- Arrange for someone to show candidates the workplace, if required. This person should not be a panel member and no information about candidates should be fed back to the panel.
- Ensure someone is available to administer any tests.
- Ensure the panel have the necessary paperwork.
- Check that CRB proformas are completed where necessary.

19.3 Interviewing

The purpose of the interview is to:

- Provide the selection panel with relevant information, beyond that already contained in the application form, about a candidate's ability to do the job.
- Allow a candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and abilities against the person specification.
- Provide the candidate with more information about the job and the service area to help them to decide if the job is right for them.

The interview could be the first face to face contact the applicant has had with the Council, so the selection panel are effectively ambassadors and will influence whether the applicant leaves with a positive view, regardless of the outcome of the interview.

A fair and open interview must be given to each candidate.

Many people are not aware of their own stereotypes and personal bias. These are often a result of a lifetime's influences. At the simplest level, stereotyped attitudes can affect a person's ability to conduct an interview. Research shows that we select in our own image. Try

and be aware of your own bias and assess purely using the person specification criteria to provide a fair interview.

Please note that one to one interview are not permitted at Hyndburn Borough Council.
This is because:

- One-to-one interviews are bad practice. They are more open to subjectivity and misinterpretation. They do not reflect open, transparent practices and lack professionalism. Any claims of discrimination would be hard to defend.
- The best recruitment decision is an objective decision and this can best be reached with a minimum of two panel members who can openly discuss their conclusions and decisions.

To ensure equity, it is essential that the membership of the short-listing and interviewing panels are the same unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. The line manager should be involved in selection and ideally take on the role of the Chair. The panel should attempt to reflect a diverse workforce.

Venue

The venue selected must be private and arrangements made for no interruptions. This could include forwarding the telephone to a different number and putting a sign on the door. The venue must be accessible. Ensure that a disabled applicant can gain entry to the venue, preferably without assistance, and be able to move around independently. If assistance is necessary, clear arrangements must be made to protect the dignity of the candidate and the Chair must ensure the candidate understands what to do on arrival. Parking facilities may need to be provided near to the venue for disabled people.

Preparing questions for interview

Interviews should follow a previously agreed set of questions. You should refer to the person specification to remind you which criteria are to be assessed at interview. Questions should then be prepared based on these criteria and, to help with scoring, you should also produce a summary of expected responses.

Interviews for posts involving working with children should include questions that will explore candidates' suitability to work with children as well as suitability for the post in general, for example:

- Motivation to work with children and young people.
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people.
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours.
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.

All candidates must be asked the same set of open questions to ensure consistency and fairness. Probing questions may vary slightly as they are introduced relevant to the response. In some cases it will be possible to anticipate which probing questions may be necessary. This combination of open and probing questions will ensure that the panel get as much information from the candidate about their potential suitability to do the job.

Open: Ask open questions to introduce the subject and gain maximum information from the candidate without leading them, for example:

"What do you think the main role of an Enquiry Officer is?"

"What was the project you were involved in?"

Open Probe: You can then ask probing questions to get more detail, for example:

"Tell me more about that?"

"What difference did that make to the service?"

“What did you do to resolve that?”

You may need to ask further probing questions to explore the topic in depth.

Closed: Ask closed questions to double check facts, for example:

“Did you meet the deadline?”

“Did you do that by yourself?”

Close the subject:

“Did you want to add anything else?”

“Are there any other examples you want to give?” – Could be used where candidates are struggling or nervous.

Use questioning techniques to get **examples** of skills and knowledge and how these could be applied. Evidence from the past is a more reliable predictor of future behaviour.

You might also wish to ask questions to explore in more depth any information which has already been given on the application form, for example:

- To clarify any vague information.
- To check out inconsistencies with dates.
- If you need more information on qualifications.

Questions to avoid

Avoid asking:

- Hypothetical questions – These can show how well a candidate can think through a response but they do not show how someone will behave at work.
- Multiple questions – These can be confusing and candidates will only be able to answer the parts they can remember. Keep your questions simple and be clear about what you are trying to find out.
- Leading questions – These prompt the candidate to give the expected response.

Scoring Questions

The Service is adapting a standard scoring system for questions based on the following

:

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria	Scoring
0	0	Well below Standard
2	1	Below Standard
4	2	Meets Standard
6	3	Above Standard
8	4	Exceptional

Notes must be taken how the applicant responds to all criteria or to the presentation topic. (each of the person criteria should be scored that are assessed by interview and presentation)

Each question can be scored if there is only one question from each of the criteria. Try to avoid asking one question that spans several criteria of a selection process. If you ask more than one question which is assessing one criteria, avoid scoring each question unless you explicitly wished to weight that criterion.

In rank ordering candidates it is reasonable to count up the total scores from each applicant provided that the applicant meets all the essential criteria and that the desirable criteria are of the same priority or weight. It is not appropriate to grade the score for certain criteria, i.e. the person simply satisfies the criteria or does not meet the criteria. E.g. if a driving licence is an essential requirement then this would score a 4 and someone who did not hold a licence would score 0.

It is helpful that panel members benchmark their scoring after the first interview for consistency but the Chairperson must review any inconsistency of scoring of questions/ criteria and examine their evidence and seek to resolve significant anomalies in building a consensus decision. Where scores are changed a note should be made as to why.

Final preparation

The selection panel members should meet before the interview to:

- Agree the questions.
- Decide which questions each panel member will ask.
- Identify any other roles, such as who will give an overview of the section or job.
- Decide how to conduct the interview, such as at what point a presentation will take place.

Establish rapport

Being interviewed for a job can be a challenging experience. Try to ensure that the environment is as comfortable and relaxing as possible. Establishing rapport will provide a starting point for selection decision making and create a mutual interest between applicant and interviewer. This can be done by:

- Starting promptly and on time. This relies on you predicting sufficient time for each interview when you provided the schedule to HR.
- Welcome the applicant by name in a friendly manner.
- Introduce everyone on the panel.
- Explain the purpose and procedure of the interview, including:
 - How long the interview is likely to last.
 - All candidates will be asked the same questions.
 - The panel will be taking notes in order to help them assess candidates.
 - How the vacant post fits into the team, section, or department.

- The candidate will have an opportunity to ask questions after the panel have asked their questions.
- How tests and exercises will be incorporated into the process and decision making.
- If you have asked for a presentation explain when you will ask them to start, reassure them that they will be allowed time to set up and remind them how long you will allow for the presentation.

Before proceeding to the set questions, ask the candidate if they are ready to continue.

Ask set questions

Use the agreed questions. Refer to the application form if this is appropriate. Use open and probing questions. Clarify any points that are not clear. Listen carefully and use active listening body language to show you are listening to reassure and engage the candidate, for example:

- Maintaining eye contact.
- Leaning forward.
- Smiling.
- Nodding.
- Open body posture.

You must not ask questions about, or refer to, a candidate's personal circumstances, for example marital status, age, disability, child care arrangements, colour, religion or racial origin.

Provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions

When the panel have asked their questions they should provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions. Only give information in detail if requested to do so by the candidate. Many candidates will not be able to take in detailed information due to the pressure of the situation. Remember that you have a schedule to keep to and to be fair to subsequent candidates you should aim to finish on time.

Summarise and close

To finish you should:

- Confirm any details, for example contact information.
- Ensure there are no further questions from either panel members or candidate.
- Clarify any conditions of service as appropriate, such as annual leave entitlement and hours of work. You should also notify external candidates that new starters are subject to a six month Probationary Period.
- Thank the candidate for their interest and their time.
- Let them know when you will be reaching a decision and when and how they are likely to hear if they are successful.
- Encourage them to ask for feedback, within the four week timescale.

Interviewing people with a disability

When interviewing disabled people you must assess them against the person specification in the same way as other candidates. Do not ask any questions about their disability. If the panel decides they are the best person for the job the Chair should then discuss with them, if necessary, any reasonable adjustments that need to be made.

If a disabled person volunteers information in the interview and wishes to discuss their impairment, do so, but let them know that you are assessing them only against the criteria on the person specification.

Making a decision

After each interview each panel member must fill in the interview assessment form **without** discussion with other panel members. The selection decision must not be made until all the interviews have been completed. Once all the interviews have been completed, all panel

members discuss the evidence gathered and their individual assessments in order that a candidate can be selected.

Possible difficulties

- No appointable candidates - You may need to re-advertise. Before doing so, the panel should take into account whether the job description, person specification and advertisement should be altered and whether it has been difficult to recruit to similar posts in the past. Take advice from HR.
- Inability to reach an agreement – The panel should try to overcome this by:
 - ⇒ Revisiting the evidence gathered, discussing reasons for awarding scores for particular evidence and challenging each other. Ensuring that decisions are based on evidence collected against the person specification criteria.
 - ⇒ Considering the need to re-interview the candidates if insufficient evidence was gathered. If this is the case the panel will have to agree why insufficient evidence was gathered and how this can be improved next time.
 - ⇒ Considering whether a consensus decision would solve the problem. This should only be used as a last resort and the reason for the panel's inability to reach a decision must be recorded as well as the reason why re-interviewing is not considered a useful option.

The view of the most senior member of the panel must not be used as the final decision if it is in conflict with the other panel members. The other panel members who would be working with the new member of staff may not be committed to the decision. The senior manager may just as well have interviewed on their own.

19.4 Occupational test

Ideally the occupational test will be scheduled to take place just before or just after the applicant's interview. Ensure all materials are available, the instructions are clear and someone is available to administer and time the tests.

The tests should be scored by the panel members individually in the agreed way and the results considered during discussions when all candidates have been interviewed.

19.5 Assessment Centre

Assessment Centres will be arranged and managed by HR. Interviews are usually scheduled to take place on the same day and the assessors will feedback their results when all assessments and interviews have been completed. This is an opportunity to discuss the assessment evidence and behaviours observed by the assessors.

The selection panel and assessors will need to question and challenge each other where the candidate recommended by the assessors does not match the highest scoring candidate at interview. Studies show that Assessment Centres have higher validity than interviews when predicting future job performance.

19.6 Telephone interviews

Broadly the same skills are involved in telephone interviewing as other forms of interviewing. You will need to:

- Work to a schedule of set questions, linked to the relevant person specification criteria, and ask each candidate the same questions.
- Follow the same structure as with other interviews: Explain the process, ask open questions during the interview, allow time for the applicant to ask questions, summarise at the end and advise applicants when they will be notified of a decision and what the next assessment stages will be if they are successful.
- Under no circumstances must discriminatory questions, or potential discriminatory questions, be asked.
- Take notes and inform the candidate that you will be doing this. Try not to let this interrupt the flow of the dialogue. Some telephone systems will allow for two people to listen to the interview, one asking questions and the other taking notes. It is legally permissible to record the interview if you have sought permission from the applicant. However this can be off-putting for the applicant and you will need to allow extra time to review the interview and produce notes afterwards.

Telephone interviews are subject to the same legal restrictions as any other selection procedure. In theory there is less chance over the telephone for candidates to be discriminated against on the basis on race, age, disability or appearance. However other forms of discrimination may occur, for example some accents can be favoured over others.

Ensure HR are involved and that assessors are appropriately trained.

19.7 Psychometric tests

Psychometric tests can only be administered by qualified practitioners. For further information contact HR.

20. Confirming the Outcome of the Selection Process

Before making a final decision about who to offer the post to, review the process and paperwork to be sure that the whole exercise has been handled appropriately.

The Chair of the panel should contact the successful candidate in the agreed way as soon as possible after the decision has been made. When you inform the candidate that they have been successful, **tell them that the offer is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks**. It is important that they realise that this is not yet a firm offer and, if they are working, they are advised not to give notice to their existing employer at this stage.

It is normal practice to offer the lowest spinal column point for the grade, however you may need to take into account the candidate's existing salary and the skills and knowledge they will bring to the post. The candidate may want some time to think about the offer. Agree a timescale within which they will confirm their decision with you.

Inform HR of the successful candidate.

They will:

- Send a provisional offer letter along with associated paperwork to the candidate
- Start the pre-employment checks. You will need to liaise with HR about which checks you require. Some of them may have been carried out at the interview. (Checks could

include references, medical clearance, CRB, NI number, qualification certificates, driving licence).

- Notify unsuccessful candidates by letter as appropriate.

HR will notify the manager when responses to the checks have been received so they can review the information. In addition, HR will arrange to verify identity, qualifications, certificates or any other appropriate information and any checks required when appointing employees to work with children.

When reading a reference, consider that the referee:

- May have very little knowledge about the applicant.
- May have unjustifiably prejudiced views about the applicant.
- May overrate the applicant.
- May not know the kind of work he or she is providing a reference for.
- May be tempted to be untruthful about someone they either do or do not want to lose.

If the checks are satisfactory the Chair will liaise with the candidate to agree a start date. The Chair must notify HR of the start date and details of who and where the candidate should report to on the first day. HR will then write to the candidate to confirm this information.

21. Giving Feedback

21.1 Introduction

Candidates are entitled to receive feedback about how they performed against the selection criteria, including reasons why they were not successful.

Feedback must be given by a member of the panel. Ensure the person giving feedback will be available and has the capacity to do this. It can be time consuming to look back through notes and prepare constructive feedback and it is difficult to predict how many applicants will request it.

The person giving feedback will need to keep documents to help them do this but must ensure short listing and interview scoring sheets are returned to the HR when they are no longer needed. Candidates are given four weeks from receiving notification that they have not been successful to request feedback.

Verbal feedback is most commonly given, however you should provide written feedback if you are asked for it. Ask HR for advice before sending written feedback.

When an applicant requests verbal feedback it will be necessary to do some preparation. Therefore you should agree a convenient time to ring them back.

21.2 Unsuccessful applicants

Applicants who are not short-listed can request feedback if they have not been contacted within four weeks of the closing date.

Managers are not obliged to give feedback if the request is received more than four weeks after the applicant is informed of the decision. In other words:

- Eight weeks after the closing date for applicants who are not short-listed (since the applicant is advised to assume they have not been short-listed if they are not contacted within four weeks of the closing date).
- Four weeks from being told verbally or receiving a letter informing them that they have been unsuccessful.

Feedback to unsuccessful internal candidates needs to be given sensitively and is best done in person rather than by telephone or in writing. They may be feeling embarrassed and their confidence could be affected, particularly if they are already working in the service area or will come into contact with selection panel members regularly. Give them the opportunity to talk about their aspirations and try to advise them about development opportunities and experience that will help them with applications in the future.

21.3 Successful candidates

Successful candidates should always be given feedback as part of their induction and personal development plan. Inform them in advance that you will be giving feedback if they have not already asked for it. The information can be valuable to highlight evidence about their strengths and where they will need to develop in order to fulfil their new role.

21.4 Tips for giving feedback

The person giving feedback should be the chair of the panel and must be confident. Feedback should be objective, thorough and relate specifically to the criteria against which the assessment was made. It is important that any information given to unsuccessful candidates should be given sensitively and carefully. The aim of providing feedback is to provide helpful information for their future development.

Comparisons with other applicants or information about other application forms should not be given. It is not helpful to tell an applicant that they were almost selected or “second”.

Ensure that you prepare before you contact the applicant. This will mean gathering relevant documents, such as:

- Person specification.
- Application form.
- Short-listing form.
- Notes of questions and responses at interview.
- Evidence from occupational tests or assessment centres.
- Assessment forms.

When you contact the applicant, check that it is a good time for them to receive the feedback and, if so, remind them that it was the criteria from the person specification that were being tested. Ask them for their views about how they did.

Start with positives: Choose an item from the person specification where the candidate performed well, for example:

“We asked you to tell us about a time when you had dealt with a difficult customer. You gave us an excellent example of this, you told us about the language you used and how you had diffused the situation”.

Move on to areas where there was less evidence, focussing on areas where the applicant could develop, for example:

“We asked you to give us a specific example of a time when you prioritised effectively for you and your team to meet an objective. You gave us a good example of how you prioritise your own work. We probed a number of times but you gave us less evidence of how you would go about prioritising for your team”.

Offer examples to the candidate based on what evidence they gave you in the interview situation. Use words like: “You demonstrated...”; “You said...”; “You stated...”. Unless they

request otherwise, aim to give them no more than three areas for development as more than this could seem overwhelming.

Avoid exaggeration and be specific. Offer suggestions as to how the candidates could develop from the feedback, for example:

- Tell them to read the whole statement on the person specification and try to find examples that cover the whole statement.
- Suggest people develop their skills in specific areas, such as by volunteering to do presentations or chair meetings.
- Advise them to do more research prior to interview.

Finish by asking the candidate if there is anything further they would like to know. Thank them for their application and interest.

21.5 Keeping records

Keep a record of feedback given to unsuccessful candidates and pass this to the HR for retention with the other documents.

21.6 Feedback from applicants

Applicants may offer feedback about their experience of the process. Listen to their comments and inform them if you think there is any action you can take. Thank the candidate and share the feedback as appropriate, for example with the other panel members, HR.

22. Induction

The new starter must feel welcome and have opportunities to familiarise themselves with their surroundings, the people and the work without being overwhelmed. The cost of recruitment and selection is high and you cannot afford to lose an employee during the early weeks due to ineffective induction.

Start planning the induction when you have a starting date. You will need to block time out of your diary during the employee's first week and, in particular, their first day in order to spend time with them and identify their specific needs.

Use the Induction checklist to help you to remember key things you need to cover.

HR will automatically provide information for the new starter on the Corporate Awareness Programme.

Arrange a date during the first week to talk to the employee about their objectives and the support and training that will help them to meet their objectives. You can link this meeting in with feedback from the selection activities and agree a personal development plan. Also plan regular review dates.

In terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the induction information should include information about, and written statements, of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare, for example child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention or restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and children or young people.
- How and with whom any concerns should be raised.
- Relevant procedures such as whistle-blowing.

23. Probationary Period

All new entrants to local government are subject to a six month Probationary Period.

The new starter should be aware of this due to information supplied in the application pack, at interview and in the appointment letter. However, you will need to remind the employee when they start and arrange regular review dates in accordance with the procedure.

To ensure that new employees are performing to the required standard, it is important that managers follow the guidance on managing probation periods within the Induction/ Probationary Period Procedure document or ask HR for guidance.

24. Records Management

All documentation, from every selection panel member, must be returned to HR at the end of the process, this will include:

- Application forms.
- Short-listing forms.
- Interview notes.
- Assessment forms.

Panel members responsible for giving feedback will need to retain documents that will help them to prepare, for four weeks.

The information is retained in HR for an agreed period and is then destroyed.

25. Evaluating The Recruitment And Selection Procedure

It is important to spend some time reviewing what went well and what could be improved next time. Some evaluation can take place immediately, however you should continue to assess the effectiveness of the procedure once the employee has started. This can benefit your own learning and, through appropriate feedback from yourself, the Council can learn and continuously improve procedures.

Immediate evaluation:

- How easy was it to convene a trained selection panel?
- How easy was it to agree timescales and dates with the selection panel?
- Are the job description and person specification focused and not too long?
- For a new post: Was the post evaluated and approved within timescales?
- Did the advert generate sufficient, but not too much, interest?
- Did the Redeployment Procedure come into force and, if so, what impact did it have on selection?
- Were the selection methods effective?
- Did the selection decision impact on the department's equality targets?
- Were forms and correspondence used and sent as appropriate?
- How was your relationship with HR during the process?

Future evaluation:

- Was feedback given when it was requested?
- Have all documents been returned to HR?
- Was the job analysis effective?
- Do the requirements of the post contribute effectively to the team and department? Are there clear links to Corporate Plan and Service Plan.

- Have the skills and knowledge demonstrated during selection been observed since the employee started?
- Was induction effective?
- Has the employee been meeting their targets and objectives?
- Has the employee undertaken learning and development?
- Has the employee been successful during Probationary Period?

Think about what you would do differently next time and provide feedback as appropriate to your line manager, other panel members and HR,

26. Complaints, Compliments and Comments.

If an applicant contacts the panel members about the process, the matter should be dealt with as appropriate, as quickly as possible and the outcome communicated to the applicant. Contact HR if you are unsure how to answer a query or informal complaint.

Formal complaints in relation to the recruitment process should be dealt with in line with the Council's complaints, compliments and comments procedure and forwarded to the Head of HR.

It is useful for HR to receive feedback about the process so that this can be taken in to account in to as the process is reviewed.

27. Monitoring the Recruitment and Selection Procedure

27.1 Monitoring

Recruitment and workforce monitoring is driven by:

- Legislation – There is a statutory obligation in race and disability to monitor opportunities for the workforce in areas such as training and promotion.
- Codes of conduct – There are good practice guidelines in recruitment and workforce monitoring promoted by equal opportunities bodies in the areas of race, disability and gender.
- The Council monitors ten areas in relation to the composition of the workforce and our recruitment processes:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Race | • Gender | • Disability |
| • Caring status | • Sexual Orientation | • Religion or belief |
| • Gender reassignment | • Marriage and civil partnership | • Age |
| • Pregnancy and Maternity | | |

All applicants are asked to complete an Equality Monitoring Form that is provided with the application pack. HR separates these sheets from the application forms before they are passed to the Chair of the selection panel.

27.2 Monitoring Form

The HR will complete the Monitoring Form when a candidate has been selected.

The HR will use this information in annual reports about the workforce and recruitment and selection processes. Information in the reports is provided corporately.

3 HR

HR should ensure that they are on selection panels of around 10% of occasions.

Managers/Chair of Selection Panel Checklist

1. Carry out a Job analysis on the post, to ensure the post meets the requirements of the Service.	
2. Convene a selection panel	
3. Prepare job description/ person specification – methods of assessment and advert	
4. Prepare interview questions, based on the job description and person specification, using the appropriate methods.	
5. Has the post to be Job Evaluated?	
6. Where is the post to be advertised?	
7. Complete a Vacancy Authorisation Form (VAC1)	
8. Advertise the post – taking in to account advertising deadlines, closing date of vacancy.	
9. Shortlist application forms individually, arrange meeting with panel members to discuss applications	
10. Inform HR of the shortlist using the interview instruction form	
11. HR will write to all short listed candidates.	
12. Prepare room for interview - seating arrangements, refreshments, time management etc	
13. Score the candidates and agree the successful candidate	
14. Any offer will be subject to references and medical clearance	
15. Inform HR of successful candidate – HR will process paperwork.	