



# Recruitment and Selection Guidance

Guidance for Schools

Reviewed October 2022

**EVERY  
CHANCE  
for EVERY  
CHILD**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance covers the main stages of the recruitment and selection process such as determining the contract, reviewing the vacancy, job description and employee specification, advertising, short-listing, assessment and selection, conducting pre-employment checks and appointment and induction.

Candidate experience is a key part of recruitment. The recruitment process is not just about employers identifying suitable employees, but candidates finding out more about the school and considering if it's where they would like to work. First impressions matter and the recruitment process should be transparent, timely and fair for all candidates. In a digital age where candidates can share their experiences online, inefficient, poorly designed recruitment processes can negatively impact the school brand and possibly impact on the school's ability to attract candidates.

It is recommended that schools follow this guidance to ensure that recruitment and selection is carried out consistently and follows best practice. This can also help deter people from applying who are unsuitable to work with children and young people. It is essential that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, is a significant factor to consider as part of the recruitment and selection process. This is because it is a key part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

Inclusion and diversity should be integral throughout the process, with practices and systems regularly reviewed to ensure resourcing methods are inclusive and hidden bias is removed. Everyone taking part in activities such as shortlisting and interviewing must be aware of relevant recruitment legislation and the need to avoid discrimination in recruitment and selection.

Internal talent should be considered when recruiting, as providing opportunities for development and career progression can improve retention and support succession planning.

When a Headteacher is being appointed, Governors are strongly recommended to contact the Local Authority for additional support and guidance.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The purpose of this guidance is to give help and assistance on the key elements of the recruitment and selection process to Headteachers and other recruiting managers in school

### 3. EQUALITIES

3.1 Discrimination is unlawful, unfair and represents significant waste of human potential. Recruitment processes should promote equality of opportunity and attract and retain a workforce that reflects the community it serves. Schools should ensure they employ the best candidate for the job, irrespective of race, sex, marital status, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, age etc. Schools are encouraged to demonstrate they are responding to the needs and expectations of the society and community in which they operate by delivering best practice recruitment and selection which enables all people to be treated fairly.

3.2 To ensure a recruitment process complies with equalities legislation, care should be taken in drawing up the job description and person specification. Careful consideration should be given to the specific requirements of the job so that all potential applicants can clearly understand the skills and duties. Once there is clarity on the genuine requirements of the job, schools can specify the information needed from the job applicants and why it is needed. This is important because it helps schools avoid seeking unnecessary and potentially discriminatory information from applicants when developing selection criteria or preparing interview questions.

3.3 The application process should be designed to accommodate the needs of applicants from different cultural backgrounds or people with disabilities. To remove any barriers, the school should simplify requirements to respond to any selection criteria, ensure any online job portals are accessible and easy to navigate, simplify application procedures as much as appropriate and not request unnecessary information, whilst still complying with safer recruitment requirements.

3.4 Discriminatory advertising is against the law, and can limit the range of applicants, adverts should be designed to attract a diverse range of applicants. Good advertisements will focus exclusively on the skills and abilities needed to perform the job and should be written in a way that does not discourage some people from applying or imply that only certain applicants will be considered. Schools should ensure the advertisement does not include words, phrases or euphemisms that could be seen as restrictive or discriminatory. The advertisement should include a statement about equalities.

3.5 When shortlisting, recruitment panel members should have a clear understanding of the job requirements. They should request and review information from all applicants about their capacity to perform the job based on their skills and experience. They should not allow personal bias, myths or stereotypes to influence decisions. Panel members should

- evaluate applicants using the selection criteria; matching skills, ability and experience with the job requirements
- be consistent with decision-making

- clearly document reasons for making decisions to help provide feedback to applicants later.

3.6 The interview is an important opportunity for applicants to talk about their suitability for the position and what they have to offer. Recruiting managers should carefully review and plan their interview process. They should make sure all applicants have an equal opportunity to participate in their interview and explain why they are the best person for the job.

### **3.7 Disabled Applicants**

3.7.1 When inviting candidates to interview, schools should ensure that the invitation letter asks what special requirements, if any, they may require to accommodate their needs on the day of interview or assessment.

3.7.2 Section 60 of The Equality Act (2010) dictates that you cannot ask questions about health or disability prior to a job offer or during an interview except in certain specified circumstances. One of the exceptions to this rule is that you can ask a question to find out if a disabled person needs a reasonable adjustment during the recruitment process itself, or for monitoring purposes, which is used to record the diversity of applicants and employees.

3.7.3 Schools have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustment to any practice, provision or criterion or to physical features of the premises to ensure a disabled person has the same access (as far as reasonable) to everything involved in obtaining and carrying out a job. It is best practice to request that applicants inform you about any adjustments required (to the application form or the assessment/interview) by telephone or on a separate document / covering letter that does not contain any information relevant to deciding whether to short list the application. This, along with the monitoring form (if applicable) should be kept separate from the rest of the information an applicant provides. The easiest way to make sure the information about reasonable adjustments and equality monitoring is not used in the wrong way (i.e. by excluding a disabled person from the application process) is to take steps to ensure that the short listing panel do not see this information before making their decision. There should be a member of school staff who takes responsibility for coordinating and administering the recruitment process who is not involved in the short listing or interviewing stages. This will ensure that the information is not used to discriminate unlawfully against disabled candidates and the school should be able to evidence that this is not the case. Failure to make reasonable adjustments to ensure all steps of the recruitment process are barrier free could result in legal and reputational risk.

3.7.4 Schools are not required to do more than is 'reasonable' and when deciding on

whether an adjustment is reasonable, consideration should be given to how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage a disabled person would experience without the change, as well as cost (considering the availability of financial support such as Access to Work), practicality, school resources and school size.

### **3.7.5 Access to Work Scheme**

Access to Work is a government scheme that is available to help overcome the problems resulting from disability. It offers practical help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job, by giving advice and information to disabled people and through grants towards any extra employment costs that result from a person's disability.

Where a school has a disabled employee or if they want to recruit someone with a disability, they can contact the local Disability Employment advisor (DEA) through the nearest Jobcentre Plus Office. The DEA will put the school in touch with an Access to Work Adviser who will discuss the particular circumstances with the school.

- 3.8 All members of a selection panel are expected to be able to identify and avoid direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES AS A RECRUITING MANAGER**

- 4.1 The responsibilities of a recruiting manager are to ensure that:

- The school's policy on recruitment and selection is complied with
- The basis of the contract to be offered has been determined
- Relevant legislation (for example Equality Act 2010) is complied with
- All decisions are based on evidence gained through the selection process

In all aspects of the process, the recruiting manager needs to ensure that:

- a wide range of candidates are encouraged
- The procedures and practices are fair, thorough and not discriminatory.
- all candidates are treated with dignity and respect, giving them the opportunity to present their skills and experiences effectively

## **5. TRAINING AND MONITORING**

- 5.1 Governors with a responsibility for recruitment and selection must be aware of their

legal obligations under existing employment legislation.

5.2 From 1st January 2010, the School Staffing (England) Regulations (2009) states that the Governing Body must ensure that any person who interviews an applicant for any position or where there is a selection panel established for that purpose, at least one member of that panel or group should have completed the safer recruitment training as approved by the Secretary of State. It is best practice for Headteacher recruitment that this would be a non-staff governor. The Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education document advises refresher training to ensure that knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

5.3 Safer Recruitment is a training package developed for Headteachers, Governors and other recruiters which aim is to improve recruitment processes in schools to help identify, deter and reject applicants who might be unsuitable to work with children and young people. The Safer Recruitment training provides valuable background information, advice about a safer school culture, best practice suggestions and practical advice to strengthen safeguards against employing unsuitable people. It is recommended that training is refreshed every 5 years.

5.4 Where the Governing Body is involved in the recruitment process; for example in Headteacher recruitment; it is recommended that they involve the person who has undergone the safer recruitment training at all stages in the recruitment process.

## 6. EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT SERVICES

6.1 Schools may decide to use external providers to help with their resourcing and recruitment. Recruitment agencies or consultants offer a range of services such as attracting candidates, managing candidate responses, screening and shortlisting, or running assessment centres on the school's behalf. They need to have a good understanding of the school and its requirements and should comply with legislation and the schools own recruitment policies and practices.

## 7. AGENCY WORKERS

7.1 Agency workers (e.g. supply teachers) are not employees of the School. The primary responsibility for carrying out identity checks, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks), where required, and any other security checking, rests with the agency concerned. However, the school should request evidence from the agency that the necessary checks have been completed and verified.



7.2 In accordance with the Agency Workers Directive, the Headteacher should ensure that appropriate entitlements under the Directive are made available to agency workers. The school's HR provider should provide advice on this.

## 8. DECIDING ON THE CONTRACT REQUIRED

8.1 Offers of employment should always be made in writing, however it is important to be aware that a verbal offer of employment made in an interview is as legally binding as a letter to the candidate.

8.2 Schools must also know what information must be given by law in the written statement of particulars of employment, commonly called contracts of employment.

8.3 A 'contract' of employment exists when an employer and employee agree the terms and conditions of employment. A 'written statement of the main particulars' of their employment, should be provided to an employee before or on their start date.

Information which must be provided in a single document

- Names of employer and worker
- Date employment or engagement begins
- *For employees only:* date of continuous employment
- Rate of pay and frequency (weekly, monthly etc.) of payment
- Hours of work (including normal working hours, days of week and whether hours/days are variable (and, if so, how they vary))
- Entitlement to holidays (including public holidays) and holiday pay
- Any other benefits (including non-contractual benefits)
- Length of notice of termination required from employer and worker
- Job title or brief description of work
- *If applicable:* Details of non-permanent employment or engagement (e.g. period of fixed-term contract)
- Any probationary period which starts at the beginning of the engagement, including conditions and duration
- Place of work and address of employer
- Any part of any training entitlement which the employer requires the worker to complete
- Any training which the employer requires but does not pay for

8.4 The most common type of contract is a permanent, open-ended one (i.e. with no end date). The assumption is made that the contract will continue indefinitely, although provision is made for termination by notice by either party.

## 8.5 Temporary contracts

8.5.1 Temporary contracts are those which cover a temporary appointment where the termination of the appointment is decided by an event, the actual date of which cannot be predetermined. Usually a temporary contract does not have a specified end date.

8.5.2 Temporary contracts should be used:

- To cover sickness absence
- To cover paid/unpaid leave where the end date is not known
- To cover maternity leave
- To cover a temporary reduction in the hours of a member of staff
- To cover a short term temporary increase in workload

8.5.3 An employee on a temporary contract has a right to receive a minimum period of notice before the contract ends. The minimum statutory notice period is one week for each complete year of continuous service or the period specified in the contract.

## 8.6 Fixed term contracts

8.6.1 Fixed term contracts are those which cover a temporary appointment, or particular funding arrangements where the actual date of termination is known. An end date must be specified.

8.6.2 Fixed Term contracts should be used:

- Where specific funding arrangements mean there is a finite date
- To cover a period of paid / unpaid leave where the end date is known
- To cover a secondment when an end date is known
- To cover a vacancy where an appointment has been made but the appointee has not been able to take up the post immediately

8.6.3 Fixed term contracts normally end automatically when they reach their agreed end date. There is no need to give notice to the employee of the contract reaching its end date. However, if a fixed-term contract is not renewed, this is considered to be a dismissal and the employee may have accrued employment rights. It is therefore advisable to discuss the end of the contract with the employee in advance.

8.6.4 If a fixed-term contract lasts two years or more and it is not renewed by reason of redundancy, the employee has a right to a redundancy payment.

8.6.5 Fixed-term or temporary contracts should only be used:

- Where there is a need for work for a specific task or project **and/or**
- To cover absence for a limited time only **and/or**

- Where there is time-limited funding for a post

8.7 All fixed-term and temporary positions, including those of 6 months or less, should be advertised externally and recruited to using the school's recruitment policy and guidance.

8.8 The Headteacher should regularly monitor and review all current fixed term and temporary contracts to determine:

- The business case for engaging each employee on a fixed-term or temporary contract
- The length of continuous employment for each employee
- The number of extensions, renewals or continuous contracts given to each employee
- Whether there is a need for the work to continue beyond the current contract period

8.9 Fixed term and temporary contracts should not normally be of more than twelve months duration and should be terminated with the appropriate notice.

8.10 If there is a need for employment to be extended beyond 24 months, the post should be advertised and recruited to on a permanent basis. Any employee on fixed-term contracts for 4 or more years will automatically become a permanent employee, unless the employer can show there is a good business reason not to do so. Headteachers should seek advice from their HR provider regarding the renewal of fixed term contracts.

## 9. APPOINTING TEMPORARY STAFF

9.1 Anyone involved in the appointment of temporary staff should ensure that they apply the same high standards of selection to temporary appointments. There must be an assessment against the criteria in the person specification and a proper selection process should take place.

9.2 The Headteacher/manager must be sure that the applicant is suitable to appoint and should only appoint an existing temporary member of staff where they are the best person available to fill the job, taking into account the aspirations of other employees.

9.3 Public advertising is recommended as the fairest method of attracting applicants and filling vacancies.

## 10. APPOINTING CASUAL STAFF

10.1 Casual workers are not employees of the School; they are workers who are engaged on an 'as and when' basis. They should not have regularised work patterns or hours and should not be engaged on a continual basis.

10.2 The School will only engage casual workers when appropriate, for example where the work is variable / seasonal or where it is impossible to predict demand due to external factors.

10.3 There will be no mutuality of obligation between the School and casual workers, i.e. once work is offered by the School, the casual worker will have the option of accepting the offered work, but will be under no obligation to do so. Equally, there will be no obligation on the School to offer any work and certainly no guarantee that any work will be provided.

10.4 Casual employees can accrue employment rights in certain circumstances, so Headteachers should ensure that casual contracts are only used when the requirement is truly casual i.e. short term, intermittent and with no mutual obligation to offer or accept work.

10.5 It is recommended that where casual staff are used, all those people employed in this way should first go through some form of assessment to determine their suitability for the post. The equality aspects of any such arrangements must be very carefully monitored.

10.6 The school should carefully consider the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to employ staff on a casual basis. The rationale for this may be where the work is occasional or where there is no definite requirement to work a particular number of hours.

10.7 The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring casual workers' hours and working arrangements to ensure that their status does not inadvertently change to that of employee. Further advice should be sought from the HR or Legal services provider.

10.8 Where school is unsure whether it is appropriate to employ staff on a casual basis, advice should be sought from the Human Resources provider.

## 11. THE VACANCY

11.1 A vacancy is an opportunity to look at the needs of the school and where necessary, redefine a post so that these needs can be met more effectively.

11.2 Headteachers/managers should also give reasonable consideration to making changes to physical conditions, supervision, training or job descriptions which would create better job/career opportunities for people such as those with disabilities, maternity returners, young people, and people with other special needs.

11.3 All posts in school are eligible for job share requests subject to agreement by the Governing body and in line with the needs of the school.

## 12. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EMPLOYEE SPECIFICATIONS

12.1 A job description and the person specification are the key documents in any recruitment and selection process. It is good practice that recruitment and selection be based upon properly drawn up job descriptions and employee specifications. Staff involved in recruitment and selection must therefore use these as an integral part of their procedures.

12.2 The job description must be clear and reasonably concise and should be a fair representation of the post; it is not necessary or desirable to attempt to produce a highly detailed and definitive description of the post concerned. Therefore the job description should not just be a list of tasks but should also outline the responsibilities and accountabilities of the role as far as possible.

12.3 Before the specification is used for recruitment purposes it should be reviewed by all members of the selection panel. If the post is a new one, the job description and person specification must also have been job evaluated and graded accordingly (for support staff).

12.4 Any teaching posts which attract a TLR should have a job description which clearly sets out the responsibilities attached to each post and the level of the TLR applicable.

12.5 It is recommended that the following standard statement should appear in all employee specifications. It is an essential requirement and can only be tested at final selection stage,

**“Candidates should indicate an acceptance of, and a commitment to, the schools policies in relation to equality and safeguarding and promoting the welfare and children”**

12.6 When drafting a job description, the focus should be on what is to be achieved in the role, rather than how it will be achieved.

## 13. SELECTION PANEL

13.1 The selection panel has the responsibility for appointing the person who best matches the person specification and meets the requirements of the role. It is best practice not to have any staff governors on the panel to ensure impartiality.

13.2 The panel must also ensure that all relevant employment legislation and school policies are followed and that the selection process is managed in an equitable and courteous manner. Each panel should have a Chair acting as an appointing officer who is normally the person responsible for the management of the whole process.

13.3 It is good practice that selection panels have a minimum of two members and no more than four for all appointments below Senior Management Level. Where there is an even number of panel members the Chair should have the casting decision.

13.4 It is also good practice that all members of the selection panel are involved in the whole process from the outset; agreeing the job description and employee specification, the method of recruitment, short-listing and finally interviewing and selecting.

13.5 The panel is responsible for agreeing documentation and for producing the recruitment information pack which is sent out with application forms. Before preparing the advertisement, it is useful to determine the outline of the selection process and to arrange the dates when short-listing and interviewing will take place as these dates should be included in the text of the job advertisement.

## 14. ADVERTISING AND ATTRACTING CANDIDATES

14.1 The aim of recruitment advertising is to attract the right person for the job and to promote the school as an interesting and attractive place to work.

14.2 Schools should take account of the school's equalities policy and the need to reach disadvantaged groups when choosing external media and preparing advertisements. Managers should compose advertisements in a way which makes them as attractive as possible to candidates of all ages, sex, ethnic origin, disability etc. The school should re-state its commitment to equalities in the advert or information pack. Schools must not state or imply that a job is unsuitable for a disabled person (either generally or with a specific impairment) or imply that reasonable adjustment will not be made.

14.3 Adverts must be non-discriminatory. Descriptions of jobs must reflect accurately the information set out in the job description and the employee specification.

14.4 It is best practice not to recruit using word of mouth or from those whose access to

job information is by personal association and not open access. The benefits of open advertising are that this will attract a wider pool of applicants and reduce the risk of contravening equalities legislation.

14.5 Applicants should be made aware of the contact point for enquiries by telephone and all application forms sent out must show the closing date, time and to whom the form should be returned.

## 15. RECRUITMENT INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

15.1 This information should encourage suitable candidates to apply and help others to decide for themselves whether completing and returning an application is appropriate (i.e. to self-select). As a minimum, this should include the advertisement, information about the school, job description, employee specification, job information, any relevant code of conduct and equalities statement.

15.2 It is recommended that candidates are informed that they have the right to bring to the attention of the selection panel any concerns they have about the procedures especially if they felt that discrimination occurred or may have occurred during the process. Candidates may be reminded that panel members are also glad of any positive feedback.

## 16. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

16.1 If offering applicants the facility for an informal discussion within the job advert then the Headteacher should ensure that:

- The discussion does not turn into or give the impression of a telephone interview.
- Keep the discussion relevant to the post and avoid discussing personal circumstances.
- There is one point of contact for informal discussions to ensure all potential applicants are given consistent information about the vacancy.
- The same information should be given to both internal and external applicants.
- Internal applicants should not be given priority.

## 17 APPLICATION FORMS

17.1 Application forms should be used for all appointments. All forms, whether complete or incomplete, must be considered by the recruitment panel.

17.2 The panel must arrange to have completed applications for use in the final selection process. Schools should not accept CV applications as they can make fair comparison at short-listing difficult to achieve and do not provide sufficient information to comply with safer recruitment. Where a CV is submitted the applicant should be sent a copy of the recruitment pack and application form and advised that CVs are not accepted.

17.3 Applicants may require information in a different format, for example in large print, as an audio file etc. All staff involved in the recruitment process should be aware of their duty to accommodate such a request.

## 18 CLOSING DATES

18.1 Closing dates and response arrangements should be clearly indicated on the advertisement, the application form and in any covering letter.

18.2 Schools should ensure that applicants are aware and understand what will happen after their application form is received (e.g. timescale/notification of rejection/feedback).

## 19 SHORT-LISTING

19.1 All members of the recruitment panel should be equally involved and contribute to the short-listing process.

19.2 The use of a shortlisting grid, setting out the points on the person specification being considered for short-listing against each candidate, will assist the panel to be systematic when short listing for vacant posts. In any event, the reasons for shortlisting decisions should be clearly recorded so that there is an audit trail.

19.3 When drawing up a shortlist, the panel must assess applicants solely against the person specification criteria. Only candidates who fully meet the requirements of the role and, who from the application form at least, appear to be suitable to appoint should be shortlisted.

19.4 It is good practice to read all the material presented by candidates. Panel members should privately work through their assessment and then share their view with the other panel members in a group session. The school may want to consider limiting the amount of material presented by candidates to a set amount.

19.5 Panel members must draw up their shortlist systematically, measuring the candidate's experience and qualities methodically against the employee specification. The candidates' experience, qualities, qualifications etc. must be carefully assessed against the person specification and copies of the panel members assessment placed on file.



19.6 At this stage, panel members can only test those criteria assessable from a screening of the forms. It can be helpful if the person specification identifies when the criteria would be assessed e.g. from the application form, at interview or in a test.

19.7 The panel should also consider any inconsistencies in the applications, look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them and explore all potential concerns. If the applicant is shortlisted these matters can be followed up either before or at interview.

## 20. CONSISTENT PRACTICES

20.1 Selection criteria must be applied consistently to all candidates.

- All application forms should be processed in exactly the same way.
- It is important to adopt the same criteria for both internal and external applicants.
- known candidates especially those within the section/workplace should not be shortlisted for the sake of interview experience or to meet their heightened expectations.
- Panel members should not take account of pressure to shortlist a particular candidates this can potentially be discriminatory and is unlawful.
- The school should ensure that all shortlisted applicants receive the same invitation to interview letter/details and supporting material within the same timeframe and ensure the letter contains information on how to inform the panel of any special requirements needed for the day of the interview.

## 21. OTHER POSSIBLE SELECTION METHODS

### 21.1 Testing

21.1.1 Certain occupational tests must only ever be used by trained and qualified administrators. Poorly designed tests may leave the school open to allegations of unfair procedures and practices where they are not validated against job related skills and linked to the person specification criteria.

21.1.2 Selection tests of any kind must be free of unjustifiable bias, relevant to the job and reasonable adjustments must be made to enable disabled people to participate and compete on equal terms. It is good practice to inform candidates when inviting them to interview, that they will be undertaking a test, give a brief outline and explain how to inform you if they require reasonable adjustment(s) to

be made. If they chose to not inform you prior to the day but is apparent once they arrive for the test, you are still obliged to make any adjustments which are reasonable. However, you do not have to adapt a test to the point where it no longer tests whether someone would be able to do the job or not.

21.1.3 The use of psychometric (or personality profile) tests requires professional expertise within the selection process and it is recommended that they are not used as a “cut off device” to reject candidates.

21.1.4 You should seek advice from your Human Resources provider where you are using practical/vocational or other testing techniques.

## **21.2 In-tray exercises**

The Headteacher / recruitment panel may wish to design an in tray exercise for candidates. Such exercises may be used to see how the candidates may cope with working under pressure and how they cope with differing demands and also to test time management / prioritisation skills. Where schools are developing their own tests, they must be prepared in advance and the same instructions given to all candidates. Marking criteria should also be agreed in advance and the overall weighting given to the test.

## **21.3 Presentations**

It is good practice to give candidates the presentation topic/title in advance. For more senior positions candidates may be given the presentation topic/title and materials on the day of the interview with preparation time. In such instances a recruiting panel may want to test candidates’ ability to cope under pressure and knowledge / expertise “on the spot”. In all cases candidates should all be offered the same materials and given the same time scale in which to prepare and present. Marking criteria should also be agreed in advance and the overall weighting given to the presentation.

## **21.4 Children and Young People Panels**

Where children / young people are involved in the selection process:

- They should be fully briefed on the process prior to the interview.
- A facilitator should be present throughout the interview.
- Questions formulated by the children / young people should have the prior approval of the Headteacher.

## 22. RECORD KEEPING

22.1 It is essential that recruitment panels keep clear, concise and comprehensive notes throughout the shortlisting and interview processes to be able to justify their rationale for:

- Inviting candidates to interview.
- The actual appointment decision.
- Reasons why candidates were unsuccessful.
- To provide feedback as to why those candidates that were unsuccessful.

22.2 Under the Data Protection Act 1998 applicants and candidates can request to see any manual or electronic records that the school holds on them, this includes any notes that the recruitment panel make at shortlisting and interview.

22.3 Shortlisting and interview notes may also be brought before a tribunal should an unsuccessful candidate bring a claim against the school/LA. It is vitally important that these notes are clear and concise in order to defend the school/LA against any potential claims.

22.4 Recruitment files should be held for a period of 12 months and then should be confidentially disposed of.

22.5 Interview notes should be placed on the successful candidate's personal file as part of their employment record with the school/LA.

## 23. CHOOSING WITH CARE - SAFER RECRUITMENT

23.1 Advertisements, candidate information packs, job profiles and person specifications should include an appropriate statement such as 'This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.'

23.2 When recruiting to a post working with children / young people it is important that when devising interview questions the recruitment panel not only measure the candidates knowledge, experience, skills and abilities but that the interview process is also used to measure candidates motives, attitudes and behaviours towards children / young people.

23.3 Any areas of concern should be specifically documented and followed up further with the candidate or through further pre-employment vetting checks.

## 24. FAILURE TO APPOINT WITHIN 3 MONTHS

24.1 Where the recruitment process has been followed and where a successful candidate has been identified and due to one of the following reasons below is not appointed or fails to complete the required probationary period; the Headteacher may offer the post to the next suitable candidate from those interviewed without having to re-advertise the position and repeat the recruitment process.

- Where the successful candidate has declined the position.
- Where the offer of employment is rescinded due to the results of pre-employment checks.
- Where the successful candidate is in post and resigns from the school within 3 months of appointment.
- Where the successful candidate does not complete their probationary period and leaves within 3 months of appointment.

## 25. REJECTING CANDIDATES

25.1 It is recommended that schools should include information in the pack about how and when unsuccessful candidates will be notified.

E.g. *“If you haven’t heard anything after 6 weeks you may assume you have not been shortlisted”.*

25.2 A panel must not change their decision to interview an applicant because they disclose a disability or protected characteristic. The panel should also not change the way you interview them, e.g. cutting the interview short, unless the change is to make a reasonable adjustment.

25.3 The panel can legitimately reject a disabled candidate if they are unable to demonstrate the appropriate ability, skills or experience (unrelated to their disability), and when another candidate has more suitable skills and experience for the role. The school may also reject a disabled candidate if their disability makes him/her substantially less suitable for the position even after reasonable adjustments to overcome the effect of the disability have been considered.

## 26. DECLARATION OF INTEREST OR RELATIONSHIPS

26.1 Any member of a selection panel should make a declaration if any applicant is a relative or a friend from outside the work environment. Employees/applicants also have a duty to declare any interest that they may have in respect of any aspect of the school’s

business.

26.2 It is the Recruiting Manager's responsibility to ensure that if an applicant declares an interest or relationship with someone in the school, that the person concerned does not take any part in the recruitment process. If the Recruiting Manager themselves identify that they have an interest or relationship with an applicant they must declare this immediately and remove themselves from the recruitment process. If this is not possible, for example in a small school, they should not be part of the decision making process.

## 27. OBJECTIVES OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

27.1 The final selection is not just a test of the candidates but also a test of the interviewer's ability to listen, probe, assess and to be objective and fair. The interviewers' responsibilities are: -

- To determine each candidate's suitability for the job as measured against the person specification
- To maintain the image of the school as a good employer
- To select the right person for the job

## 28. PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

28.1 The Chair of the selection panel is responsible for the effective management of the recruitment process, they should ensure that: -

- Candidates are provided with an outline of the process they will be expected to undertake.
- The panel are objective and seek to identify each candidate's abilities and potential contribution.
- Exactly the same standards are set for all candidates and they are assessed against these using agreed scoring ratings and criteria.
- Panel members do not make generalised assumptions about individuals based on their perception of them.
- Each candidate is assessed according to their personal capability to carry out the particular post. It should not be assumed that certain kinds of candidate are more or less able to perform certain occupations or duties.
- Questions are always related to the job and to those requirements set out in the person specification.

28.2 It is important that the panel be aware of cross-cultural communication issues such

as language, culture and non-verbal behaviour which may affect candidates from varied backgrounds and/or cultures. The questions to be asked at the interview should therefore be well thought out and decided upon beforehand. As far as possible, the same questions should be put to all the candidates in order to avoid treating one candidate less favourably than another. However it is possible to ask supplementary questions of the candidates which will be specific to the individuals.

28.3 The venue for interviewing candidates needs to be convenient and accessible, with disabled parking facilities. The venue should have disabled toilets and consideration should be given to whether the rooms being used for the process are accessible, with level access.

28.4 All applicants who are invited to an interview should be informed that they will be required to bring with them evidence of identity, right to work in the UK, address and qualifications. Candidates who have not submitted a signed application form, i.e. an on line form, will need to provide a signed copy of the application form at the interview to confirm the content is accurate.

## 29. THE INTERVIEW

29.1 An example interview format is shown below:

- The chair of the recruitment panel will introduce themselves and ask all panel members say their names and positions within the school.
- The chair of the panel should attempt to put the candidates at ease and make sure they have access to water.
- The chair of the panel should explain the format of the interview and when they can expect to be notified of the outcome of the interview.
- The panel members should take it in turns to ask pre-determined questions, listen to the candidate's response and take comprehensive notes
- The panel may ask further probing or supplementary questions at any time to clarify any points or to draw out further information from the candidate about how they may best meet the criteria.
- The candidate should be given an opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the post, working for the school or terms and conditions of employment.

- The chair of the panel will then bring the interview to a close and the panel should then individually score the candidate's performance before the next interview.

29.2 It is important that the recruitment panel are aware of their body language and are conscious not to give the candidates the wrong impression. For example continuous nodding of your head whilst the candidate is answering a question may give the candidate the impression that what they are saying is correct or the answer you want to hear which actually may not be the case.

### **29.3 Structured Interview Questions**

29.3.1 Interview questions should be related back to the job description and person specification.

29.3.2 It is important that the panel can establish what the candidate's involvement in a certain situation was. For example if a candidate says, "we did this..." probe further and ask what their particular role was or what part they played in a situation.

### **29.4 Scoring and Weighting the Interview**

29.4.1 By implementing a structured scoring system during interviews, a clear audit trail is established. It provides documentary evidence and justification for appointing the successful candidate and clear reasons for not appointing other candidates. The panel should agree a scoring system prior to the interviews.

29.4.2 Weighting systems also need to be discussed and if it is decided that one or more particular area should have more relevance, then the weighting for these areas may be higher than other areas being assessed. Any such weighting then feeds through to the total interview score and this will assist the recruitment panel in identifying those candidates that best match the criteria.

29.4.3 It is advisable to allow time between each interview to score each candidate on an individual basis by each panel member. It is not advisable to score throughout the interview as each candidate deserves the recruitment panel to be thoroughly concentrating and actively listening to their responses.

29.4.4 Scoring should also not be left until the end of the day when recollections can be hazy or vague after several candidates.

## 30 DECISION MAKING

30.1 Relevant and objective selection criteria should be used, and it should be clear from the documentation how the final decision was reached. Scoring records will also be useful if the decision is later challenged.

30.2 The final decision must be based on the job description and person specification using agreed criteria and defining the standards required to perform the job. Each candidate must be measured against these benchmark requirements. A disabled candidate's ability should be considered after reasonable adjustments have been made. It is good practice to involve the candidate, by discussing adjustments within the interview process, rather than assuming or guessing what would be effective / appropriate.

30.3 Panel members must ensure they have sound and accountable reasons why all candidates were not selected at any stage and take into account all the evidence they have collected. The selection panel should normally unanimously agree their final selection and formally record this. Where there is no ideal candidate, the school should consider whether it may be better to re-advertise the post rather than offering the role to the second best candidate.

30.4 Reasons for rejection should be recorded based on the person specification requirements. All selection assessment records should be handed to the Chair of the panel. Applications and interview records should be kept for approximately 12 months after notifying unsuccessful candidates. This takes into account the fact that an applicant can bring a claim for discrimination within 3 months from the date of the rejection for the role, but also that this time limit can be extended where a Tribunal feels it is 'just and equitable to do so'.

30.5 It is important that following the interviews a culture exists where panel members feel able to speak up or challenge other panel members about their views or assumptions about a particular candidate and have an open and fair discussion before coming to an agreement on the appointment.

## 31 CONFIDENTIALITY

31.1 Information obtained within the whole selection process must be treated as confidential. All information will be handled sensitively and used only for its proper purpose. Comments about specific candidates' performance must not be revealed outside of the process, except, in relation to personal feedback to individual candidates where they have requested this.



## 32 OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

32.1 Once a decision is taken to appoint a candidate, a conditional offer is made subject to receipt of:

- satisfactory medical report (from the School's Occupational Health Provider following receipt of a completed health questionnaire and appointment as required)
- satisfactory enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (and receipt of overseas criminal record checks, if required).
- a separate barred list check will be obtained if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS disclosure certificate is available, however this should only be in exceptional circumstances. A risk assessment will need be completed and authorised by the Headteacher and the risk assessment will be reviewed regularly pending receipt of the disclosure certificate.
- original qualification certificates if applicable;
- two satisfactory written, verified references;
- evidence of entitlement to work in the UK.

A confirmed and written offer is made after receipt of these and any other conditions for appointment have been met. This is effectively a proposal to enter into a contract of employment. Terms and conditions must be explained and agreed before commencement of employment.

Details of pre-employment checks completed will be entered on the School's Single Central Record (SCR).

## 33 PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

33.1 The following checks will be carried out for all successful applicants:

- verification of identification in line with DBS guidelines and procedures;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- verification of professional qualifications;
- verification/satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment history;
- verification of overseas criminal record checks (as appropriate) to cover periods of living/working abroad;

- verification (by self-declaration on the application form for employment) that there is no known medical reason which would prevent the applicant from carrying out the essential duties of the position; and consideration of the need for any special adjustments or adaptations so the applicant could carry out the essential duties of the position;
- verification of any prohibitions from teaching and management of schools.

## 33.2 References

- 33.2.1 For all regulated activities, references will be taken up on short listed candidates prior to interview unless candidates have clearly indicated that they do not wish referees to be approached prior to interview. *Note: there must be exceptional circumstances for the School not to request references prior to interview, or prior to an offer of employment being made.* Having the reference responses prior to interview allows the panel to discuss the content with applicants, and this ensures best practice is observed in relation to Safer Recruitment. No questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.
- 33.2.2 All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory references. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the position applied for is a teaching vacancy, the reference must be signed off by the headteacher of their current employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children, an additional reference should be taken up from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. No referees should be from a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.
- 33.2.3 All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.
- 33.2.4 All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification for the role for which the applicant has applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:
- the applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title / duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record;
  - whether the applicant has had disciplinary action taken involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired), and;
  - whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour

towards children or young people, except where the allegation or concerns were found to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious.

- 33.2.5 Questions about health or sickness records will only be included if a reference request is sent out after the offer of employment has been made.
- 33.2.6 References must be obtained directly from the referee and references or testimonials provided by the applicant or open references or testimonials are not acceptable.
- 33.2.7 The school will compare all references with any information given on the application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the applicant and the relevant referee before any appointment is confirmed.
- 33.2.9 In certain circumstances it may be a referee's policy to provide factual information only (i.e. to confirm name, job title and dates of employment). When requesting references, the school will ask the referee to state that they only provide factual information if this is the only information they are providing.

## 34. OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

- 34.1 Where the individual has lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks may be appropriate, particularly where a DBS check is required. These checks may need to be undertaken by the school and can include, for example, verifying the individual's references by telephone and seeking criminal record information from their country of origin.
- 34.2 Candidates from overseas must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools, including obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information. This still applies even if the candidate has never been to the UK.
- 34.3 When recruiting, schools:
- must follow part 3 of Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) statutory guidance, which sets out the safer recruitment checks schools must conduct.
  - must make any further checks they think appropriate so that relevant events that occurred outside of the UK can be considered - the Home Office provides guidance on criminal records checks for overseas applicants.
  - can ask candidates for a teaching position to provide proof of their past conduct as a teacher as issued by the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked - where available, this can be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess suitability.

## 35. SALARY ASSESSMENT

35.1 The school is responsible for determining the starting salary of the appointee. The school must undertake the salary assessment for any new starter in accordance with the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document, the stated intention in the advertisement and the school's own Pay Policy. Account may be taken of the previous experience of the individual and of the salary level in their current post.

## 36. WITHDRAWING A JOB OFFER

36.1 All offers of employment are made on a provisional basis, subject to all necessary clearances being successfully completed. This means that a school can legally withdraw an offer of employment should it be necessary. All information available will need to be taken into account before making a decision.

36.2 Where a school wishes to withdraw an offer of employment, advice should be sought from the HR provider before doing so. Where the employee has already commenced work it is no longer a job offer and the school should seek advice from their HR provider on the appropriate course of action if the school wish to terminate.

36.3 School will need to consider what the appropriate course of action is where:

- The candidate is found to be on a barred list: or
- The DBS Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children by a Court: or
- An applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, their application; or
- There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

In relation to serious safeguarding concerns the school will need to report these to the police and/or DfE Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit. This should be discussed with the HR provider.

## 37. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF SELECTION PROCESS

37.1 The school should inform interviewed candidates as quickly as possible about the

outcome and should determine options concerning starting salary and terms for the successful candidates(s) in line with the school's pay policy and the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document. Differential terms must be justifiable and any negotiations within normal parameters.

## 38. FEEDBACK TO CANDIDATES

38.1 All short-listed candidates should be told of the outcome of their interview, and any unsuccessful applicants seeking information about why they were not selected, should be given honest and thorough feedback about their application at the earliest convenience.

38.2 To ensure consistency, one member of the interview panel should be designated to give such feedback. There should be an agreed message determined at the end of the selection process' final decision.

## 39. REVIEW AND MONITORING

39.1 At the end of each selection process, those responsible should review the decisions they have made and the procedures used to ensure they are confident that the approach adopted has reflected the school's commitment to equality. The recruitment panel should be able to justify every decision taken and the process which has been adopted to arrive at their selection.

39.2 A note of the reason for rejection for each unsuccessful candidate must be made, this could be recorded on the back of the application form. The reasons should relate to an area or areas of the employee specification.

- The recruitment master file must be kept for at least 12 months and should contain key documentation. This should include all interview notes.
- It is always important to review the whole process on completion to ensure equality of opportunity has been observed and to set out, for future exercises, more pro-active steps where candidates from under-represented groups have not applied/or have not performed as expected within the selection process.

## 40. NOTIFYING HUMAN RESOURCES

40.1 Once all of the recruitment procedures are complete, all relevant documents for setting up a new starter should be sent to the Human Resources provider. The contract will be issued on the basis of the information that the school provides, therefore it is important that this information is accurate.

## 41. MAINTAINING A SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD (SCR)

41.1 The Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, explains that schools must keep a single central record (SCR) to demonstrate that they have carried out mandatory pre appointment checks. The guidance explains that the SCR must cover:

- All staff who work at the school including supply staff to the school whether employed directly by the school or local authority or through an agency and have regular contact with children
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school. This covers volunteers, Governors who also work as volunteers within the school, and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or other experience for pupils but who are not staff members e.g. a specialist sports coach or artist

The record must indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity-name, address and date of birth
- Qualifications-where the qualification is a requirement of the job i.e. those posts where a person must have QTS;
- Evidence of right to work
- DBS—for all those who require a check under the guidance and regulation applying at the time they were recruited
- Date that the check was evidenced

As well as recording whether or not various checks have been completed, schools are also required to keep copies of the following documents on staff personnel files:

- Documents used to verify the employee's identity
- Evidence of the right to work in the UK
- Evidence of the required qualifications

## 42. COMPLAINTS

42.1 School should be aware that an applicant can allege discrimination against a potential employer although there is no direct employment relationship. Formal complaints about the recruitment process should be dealt with through the schools' complaints procedure.

## 43. INDUCTION

43.1 A systematic induction programme should be prepared to help the new employee adjust to the new social and working environment and to become effective in the job as soon as possible. People with disabilities may require particular reassurance and encouragement when taking up employment in a new role and a clearly structured induction programme will support this.

43.2 Headteachers should ensure that they follow the statutory induction programme for Early Career Teachers where applicable.

43.3 The purpose of induction is to:

- Confirm the conduct expected of teachers and support staff within the school
- Provide training and information about the school's policies and procedures
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role
- Provide individual information about what support and assistance is available, and what reasonable adjustments will be made (acknowledging that these adjustments will be reviewed regularly as needs change)
- Provide new employees the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities
- Enable the headteacher or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and take steps to address these in a timely manner.

The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new staff member but should include information about and written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention or restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any other relevant child protection or safeguarding procedures
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff in school
- How and with whom any concerns about any issues should be raised and All relevant employee procedures such as disciplinary, capability whistle blowing etc.

## 44. REFERRALS TO THE DBS AND TEACHER REGULATION AGENCY (TRA)

44.1 This guidance is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks, the school has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual: -

- has applied to work in a regulated activity despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

44.2 If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the School must refer to the LA for advice.

## 45. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For any further information on this guidance please contact your HR provider.