

Recruitment Policy



The Council recognises its employees as being fundamental to its success. A strategic and professional approach to recruitment and selection help enable the organisation to attract and appoint employees with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil its strategic aims and support the Council's people first values. We are committed to applying our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy at all stages of this policy. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to any protected characteristic.

This policy applies to all potential and existing employees. Those involved in carrying out recruitment and selection represent the Council and must promote the Council in a positive manner.

Policy Title	Recruitment Policy
Policy Author	HR Team - PSPS
Policy Issue date	2026
Policy Review date	2029, or earlier if required
Policy Consultation	Trade Unions recognised by the Council Council Reader Panel Senior Leadership Team
Policy Sign-off	Head of Paid Service/SHDC Council

Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Introduction

This Policy sets out the Council's standards, processes, and responsibilities for recruiting and appointing internal and external candidates, including Apprentices. It ensures practices are consistent, inclusive, efficient and effective, aligned with legal requirements and SELCP governance.

The Council is committed to

- Disability Confident principles
- Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant (Bronze).
- Promoting fairness, transparent and non-discrimination at every stage of recruitment

Commitment to Fairness and Equality

The Council is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to:

- Providing equal employment opportunities and preventing unlawful discrimination;
- Maintaining a workplace free from harassment and bullying;
- Fostering dignity and respect for all;
- Ensuring both employees and prospective employees are treated equitably and fairly throughout the employment lifecycle.

The policy will be reviewed in line with changes arising from the Council's EDI programme of work, ensuring recruitment practices remain inclusive and up to date.

Scope

This Policy applies to all recruitment conducted on behalf of the Councils, excluding statutory chief officer, non-statutory chief officer and deputy chief officer roles, which follow procedures set out in each Council's Constitution and the SELCP Memorandum of Agreement (Shared Workforce). These exempt roles are governed by the Chief Officer Employment Panel and Chief Officer Employment Appeals Panel.

Neurodiversity Inclusion

The Council recognises and values the diversity of thought, experience, and strengths that neurodivergent individuals bring to the workplace. Neurodiversity encompasses conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other neurological variations.

Our commitment:

- Ensure job descriptions, adverts, and selection processes are accessible and inclusive for neurodivergent candidates. This includes using clear, concise language, offering alternative application methods, and being flexible with interview formats.
- Make reasonable adjustments during recruitment, such as providing additional time for assessments, offering quiet spaces for interviews, and allowing candidates to bring a support person if needed.
- Provide training and resources to all employees involved in recruitment to raise awareness and understanding of neurodiversity, including respectful and inclusive language and behaviour.
- Encourage candidates to request adjustments at any stage and ensure these are considered promptly and sensitively.
- Continuously review and improve recruitment practices to foster a culture of inclusion and respect for all employees.

Supporting Documents and Legislation

All supporting documents referenced in this policy are accessible via the Council's HR SharePoint site: [PSPS Documents - HR Documents - Recruitment - All Documents](#)

This includes templates, guidance, and forms required for recruitment and selection processes.

The Council's recruitment policy and procedures are underpinned by the following key legislation:

- **Equality Act 2010**
Prohibits discrimination and requires fair, inclusive recruitment practices.
- **Employment Rights Act 2025**
Sets out statutory employment rights and protections.
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
Governs the treatment of spent convictions in recruitment.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 & General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**
Regulates the collection, processing, and storage of candidate data.
- **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**
Requires employers to verify candidates' right to work in the UK.
- **Agency Workers Regulations 2010**
Ensures agency workers receive equal treatment after 12 weeks in a role.

- **Police Act 1997 & Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
Regulates Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks for safeguarding.

Table of Contents

1. Key Responsibilities.....	5
2. Recruitment & Selection – Vacant Post Identified	6
3. Job analysis	7
4. Corporate Vacancy Management Process	7
5. Job Description (JD) & Person Specification (PS)	8
6. Job Evaluation Review.....	9
7. Advert	9
8. Advertising Process	12
9. Application Process.....	12
10. Longlisting & Shortlisting	13
11. Training Requirement	14
12. Interview Arrangements	14
13. Interview Selection Tools	15
14. Panel Diversity and Independent Members.....	16
15. The Interview	17
16. References and Post Selection Checks.....	18
17. Record Keeping	19
18. Appointment.....	20
19. Safer Recruitment	20
20. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).....	21
21. Agency Staff	21
22. Politically Restricted Posts	22
23. Market Supplement	22
24. Beyond Recruitment (Induction & Onboarding)	22
25. Feedback Mechanisms and Continuous Improvement.....	23
26. Data Protection	23
27. Fraud and Dishonesty Prevention	23
28. Policy Review	23

Appendices – Guidance & Checklist	24
A. Recruitment Checklist	24
B. Inclusive Interview Preparation (Optional)	25
C. Ringfenced Roles (Internal) & Redeployment	25
D. Interview Panels & Scoring Matrices	26
E. Reasonable Adjustments (Selection & Interview)	26
F. Remote/Hybrid Working Consideration.....	26
G. Advertising Exceptions & Direct Offers	27
H. Secondments (Including Cross-Council).....	27
I. Right to Work (RTW) Guidance	28
J. Shortlisting Templates & Fair Process	29
K. Advert Compliance Checklist	29
L. Shortlisting & Scoring Matrix (Guidance).....	29
M. Reasonable Adjustments (Examples)	29
N. Sharing Interview Questions in Advance (Manager Guide)	29
O. Recruitment Flowchart (Summary).....	30
P. Ringfencing & Redeployment (Overview)	30
Q. Cross-Council Secondment Guidance & Section 113 Requirements	30

1. Key Responsibilities

1.1 This section outlines the key responsibilities of all parties involved in the recruitment process, ensuring clarity of roles and accountability throughout each stage of recruitment and selection.

Employees / Applicants

1.2 It is the responsibility of all employees to:

- Provide right to work evidence, qualifications, and suitable referees.
- Undergo DBS process, where applicable.
- Act professionally and ethically throughout the recruitment process.
- Be transparent and honest regarding potential conflicts of interest and other active employments.
- Demonstrate respectful, inclusive behaviour towards all people involved in recruitment processes.
- Submit resignation letters in good time and return Council assets when leaving.

Managers

1.3 Managers play a critical role in implementing change. This section describes the specific responsibilities of managers in applying the policy, supporting employees, and ensuring that organisational changes are carried out effectively and compassionately. It is the responsibility of all People Managers to:

- Adhere to this Policy and all related procedures.
- Treat candidates fairly and consistently; apply safer recruitment practices.
- Ensure equal opportunity and inclusive adjustments throughout selection.
- Provide a positive candidate experience regardless of outcome.
- Notify HR/Payroll of leavers promptly (including resignations).
- Ensure information submitted is accurate.
- Advert Wording: Recruiting managers are accountable for advert content, compliance, and accuracy.
- Armed Forces Identification: Use the application self-declaration/tick box (where present) and consider Armed Forces Covenant commitments during shortlisting where applicable.
- English Language Requirement: Include in adverts and Job Descriptions for public-facing roles (see section 7.5)
- Disability Confident Scheme: Where a candidate has declared a disability and meets all essential criteria for the role, they must be offered an interview in line with the scheme's commitments.

PSPS Human Resources Team

1.4 The PSPS Human Resources Team provides essential support and guidance throughout the change process. This section sets out the team's responsibilities in advising managers and employees, coordinating consultation, and ensuring compliance with policy and legislation. It is the responsibility of the HR Team to:

- Guide and advise recruiting managers in applying this Policy.
- Ensure processes satisfy safer recruitment and equal opportunity.
- Process HR & Payroll Portal requests promptly and accurately.
- Review the Policy and procedures regularly in line with legislation and practice.
- Process reference requests and maintain recruitment records per retention schedules.

2. Recruitment & Selection – Vacant Post Identified

2.1 When a vacancy arises, it is essential to follow a structured process to ensure that recruitment is justified, efficient, and aligned with organisational needs. This section details the initial steps to be taken when a post becomes vacant.

2.2 Refer to Recruitment & New Starters – Managers Guidance for process details.

2.3 Recruitment (including Apprentices) requires approval in line with the current Vacancy Management process. Assess whether recruitment is necessary before proceeding.

Consider:

- Team resourcing;
- Redeployment Register – Employees currently at risk of redundancy
- Efficiency improvements;
- Internal/external environmental factors;
- Financial implications.

2.4 A TUPE transfer or redundancy does not create a vacancy; posts are disestablished accordingly.

2.5 Where a vacancy arises following dismissal, the campaign may begin only after Leadership Team approval. No conditional offer may be issued until appeal stages are exhausted.

3. Job analysis

3.1 Job analysis is a critical first step in the recruitment process. It ensures that each vacancy is reviewed in the context of current and future organisational requirements, rather than simply replacing roles on a like-for-like basis.

3.2 Conduct analysis as soon as a post becomes vacant. This analysis should not assume a like-for-like replacement and must review strategic need, alternative delivery options, workforce capacity, financial implications, and updated role requirements.

3.3 Whilst undertaking this analysis, managers should consider the tests that the vacancy management process applies, set out at section 4.1 of this policy.

3.4 Consider any available exit feedback/leaver insights to help identify potential areas for improvement and address any concerns with the role.

3.5 Align with Corporate Strategy, service objectives, operating needs, resourcing, financial sustainability, and future demand.

3.6 Cross-partnership roles require multi-Council approval before progressing.

4. Corporate Vacancy Management Process

4.1. The vacancy management process provides a framework for assessing the necessity and strategic value of filling a vacancy. This ensures that recruitment decisions are evidence-based and aligned with organisational priorities.

- 4.2. Managers must follow the vacancy control procedures in place at the time they propose to recruit ensuring compliance with current organisational requirements and governance.
- 4.3. Vacancy approval must follow the current organisational process, which typically involves obtaining approval from the relevant senior leaders (e.g., Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer) via email.
- 4.4. The approval process should ensure consideration of:
 - Fundamental need to recruit;
 - Suitability for Apprenticeship;
 - Development/secondment opportunities;
 - Financial resource;
 - Linking with other vacancies;
 - Redeployment and at-risk considerations (advertising may be delayed);
 - Amendments to role.
- 4.5. The Vacancy Management request must include evidence of job analysis and clear rationale for proceeding.
- 4.6. Managers should actively consider opportunities to support workforce development, including the use of Apprenticeships and clear development pathways are appropriate. HR can price advise on available options

5. Job Description (JD) & Person Specification (PS)

- 5.1 Accurate and up-to-date job descriptions and person specifications are fundamental to fair and effective recruitment. This section explains how to develop and review these documents to ensure they reflect the needs of the role and the organisation.
- 5.2 All posts must have an up-to-date, accurate job description/ person specification or job role profile. The person specification or job role profile is the central tool of the recruitment and selection process as it sets down the experience, knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that are necessary to enable a person to perform successfully in the role. **Where substantial changes are made to a job description or person specification, a formal job evaluation must be undertaken** to ensure the grading remains appropriate and consistent with organisational pay structures. Refer to section 5.3 for job evaluation requirements.
- 5.3 The recruiting manager must review the JD/PS following Job Analysis; discuss with Service Manager/AD and HR.

- 5.4 Use current templates on the Intranet Recruitment page; ensure correct template to avoid delays.
- 5.5 JD defines duties/seniority; PS defines qualifications, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and competencies.
- 5.6 Criteria must be job-related and justified—do not inflate requirements or create barriers.
- 5.7 Ensure the language is clear, concise and proportionate. Avoid being overly prescriptive or using unnecessarily complex or specialised terminology.
- 5.8 Use behavioural and competency-based statements where possible and ensure the JD/PS is written using inclusive, plain language that reflects the Council’s values and EDI commitments.

6. Job Evaluation Review

- 6.1. Job evaluation ensures that roles are graded fairly and consistently across the organisation. This section outlines when and how to conduct a job evaluation review as part of the recruitment process.
- 6.2. Once the JD/PS has been created/updated, consider grading implications; if a new role or the role has significantly changed, Job Evaluation (JE) applies before advertising. If the position is revised/new and not yet formally job evaluated, liaise with HR to obtain the provisional grade from HR and complete the JE process prior to advertising.
- 6.3. Advertise “subject to JE” for newly established/shared roles where grading is pending/the role is only provisionally job evaluated, ensuring candidates are informed of potential changes.

7. Advert

- 7.1. Recruitment adverts play a vital role in attracting suitable candidates and promoting the Council as an employer of choice. This section provides guidance on creating effective, inclusive, and compliant adverts.
- 7.2. Recruitment advertisements should reflect the realistic requirements of the job with regard to skills, qualifications and experience and shall not include any unjustifiable or discriminatory requirements.
- 7.3. Advertising aims to attract the best available candidate; a clear strategy is key.

- 7.4. The recruiting manager is responsible for strategy, channels, and wording compliance (corporate style and standards), HR can provide advice to support the recruiting manager or visit [PSPS Documents - Guides - All Documents](#)
- 7.5. Typical channels include:
- Council website & internal job site;
 - Local Government Jobs;
 - Social platforms (LinkedIn/X/Facebook);
 - Forces Families Jobs (mandatory for all external roles per Covenant);
 - Professional media;
 - Online recruitment websites;
 - Approved employment agencies (by AD approval);
 - Partnership agencies;
 - Schools & universities;
 - National Apprenticeship Service;
 - Other Local Authorities
- 7.6. The Council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant and is committed to supporting members of the Armed Forces community, including spouses and families. All external vacancies must also be advertised on Forces Families Jobs in line with our Covenant obligations and any future enhancements to our accreditation level.
- 7.7. For a limited number of senior management positions or hard-to-fill professional posts, it may be appropriate to use external agencies to assist with finding potentially suitable candidates.
- Approval must be obtained in line with the current senior recruitment process, which typically requires authorisation from the Assistant Director, Chief Executive, and Section 151 Officer.
 - Once approval is granted, HR must be notified to ensure compliance, manage contracts, and support sourcing activities.
- 7.8. For public-facing roles where the employee is required, as a regular and intrinsic part of the job, to speak to members of the Public, either face-to-face or over the telephone, managers must have regard to the guidance within the “Code of Practice on the English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers”. This means that they must ensure that employees in such roles, irrespective of their nationality or origins, have a command of spoken English which is sufficient to enable them to perform the role effectively. The level of fluency required must be appropriate to the demands of the role and this must be specified in the person specification or job role profile.
- 7.9. Use the corporate advert template and sell the role, location, benefits, and application process; keep content clear, concise, and engaging.

- 7.10. Adverts must reflect the corporate image and accurately describe the role; avoid overstating or adding artificial barriers.
- 7.11. Adverts must clarify DBS requirements (level) and whether the post is politically restricted. Managers must check the eligibility tool/guidance before stating DBS level/political restriction. Managers are responsible for confirming these requirements. Where uncertainty exists, managers must seek advice from HR to ensure compliance.
- 7.12. Disability Confident Commitment: Where logo placement is not supported by a platform, include commitment text and ensure branding/logo appears on Council careers pages.
- 7.13. Adverts remain live for their stated period but may close early if sufficient high-quality applications are received—seek HR advice before early closure.
- 7.14. Ensure content avoids direct/indirect discrimination.
- 7.15. Development/Trainee Pathways: Where accepting part-qualified or high-potential candidates, state the adjusted duties, salary, progression plan, and learning support in the advert, agreed with HR.
- 7.16. The Council is committed to making recruitment adverts accessible and visually representative of our inclusive values. Advert content should include:
- Department overview and purpose
 - Role overview: key duties, responsibilities, level, and potential future challenges
 - Person requirements: skills, qualifications, and attributes
 - Closing date/advertising period and clear instructions on how to apply
 - Summary of benefits and flexible/hybrid arrangements (where applicable)
 - Use of plain English, short sentences, and bullet points to aid readability
 - Compatibility with assistive technologies, such as text-to-speech and magnifier tools
 - Inclusion of diverse imagery in adverts and recruitment materials, showcasing employees from various backgrounds and abilities
 - A clear statement of the Council’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, with an invitation for candidates to request reasonable adjustments
 - Offer of flexible working arrangements and alternative assessment methods where appropriate
- 7.17. Do:
- Use plain, audience-appropriate language
 - Keep sentences short
 - Refer to the reader as “you”
 - Maintain corporate style
 - Be succinct
- 7.18. Don’t:
- Use excessive jargon

- Over-complicate sentences or paragraphs
- Rely only on technical detail
- Use uninspiring descriptions of the job role
- Focus solely on duties without person attributes

8. Advertising Process

- 8.1. Once an advert is approved, it must be published through appropriate channels to reach a diverse pool of candidates. This section details the advertising process and timelines.
- 8.2. On receipt of an approved advert request, HR normally posts within 2 working days, subject to all information and details being made available and appropriate.
- 8.3. In addition to requested channels, HR will place on the Council website, Indeed, Find a Job and Forces Families Jobs (for externals).

9. Application Process

- 9.1. A clear and accessible application process ensures that all candidates have a fair opportunity to apply. This section describes the standard application procedures and expectations for both internal and external candidates.
- 9.2. The Council's standard application process is:
 - CV (and covering letter where requested); plus
 - Completion of the online application form on the Council's recruitment system.
- 9.3. Candidates submit via the Council website / recruitment system using the Apply function.
- 9.4. The recruitment system hosts the application form template (system-generated)—ensure completion in addition to CV upload.
- 9.5. HR receives applications automatically and will collate; managers are encouraged to review applications as they arrive to keep strong candidates engaged and avoid losing them.
- 9.6. Managers will receive appropriate notifications from the system; volume alerts may be moderated to avoid unnecessary emails.
- 9.7. Internal candidates ordinarily follow the same process as external candidates unless the advert explicitly states an expression of interest (EOI) route (see secondments and ringfencing).
- 9.8. Candidates can apply through the usual recruitment process or submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by:
 - Answering the designated application question; or
 - Providing a CV with a supporting statement (if requested by the recruiting manager).

Where secondments are ringfenced to a specific team, EOIs can be submitted via the provided link or emailed to recruitment@pspsl.co.uk, who will upload them into the recruitment system. All EOIs must include confirmation of line manager support before consideration.

9.9. Secondments may be advertised internally (Intranet/Jobs page) with EOIs to recruitment@pspsl.co.uk and include confirmation of line-manager support. Candidates can apply through the usual recruitment process or submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by:

- Answering the designated application question; or
- Providing a CV with a supporting statement (if requested by the recruiting manager).

Where secondments are ringfenced to a specific team, EOIs can be submitted via the provided link or emailed to recruitment@pspsl.co.uk, who will upload them into the recruitment system. All EOIs must include confirmation of line manager support before consideration

10. Longlisting & Shortlisting

10.1. The recruitment and selection of employees is one of a manager's most important responsibilities. Normally, all members of the recruiting panel should shortlist.

10.2. All must be impartial and be able to add value to the process.

10.3. Under no circumstances must an individual who is a friend, family member or has, or has had, a personal relationship with a candidate participate in shortlisting or sit on an interview panel. The same would apply if an individual's knowledge of an applicant is such that their objectivity may be compromised. This may have particular relevance where internal applicants have been shortlisted.

10.4. In these circumstances, the individual must declare an interest and withdraw from the recruitment process.

10.5. Managers can use the Longlisting/Shortlisting Assessment template for each application (CV + personal statement). Interview only candidates meeting essential criteria, unless advert invited part-qualified/high-potential applicants.

10.6. Disability Confident Guarantee: The Council's policy ensures applicants with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria

10.7. Identify issues to test at interview for safer recruitment (e.g., employment gaps, training history, reasons for leaving).

11. Training Requirement

- 11.1. To maintain high standards and compliance, all those involved in recruitment must complete relevant training. This section outlines the training requirements for panel members and managers.
- 11.2. At least one panel member must be Safer Recruitment trained or demonstrably competent in recruitment processes for every selection panel. Managers and recruitment officers should complete core recruitment training (shortlisting, structured interviews, scoring matrices) before participating.

12. Interview Arrangements

- 12.1. Effective interview arrangements are key to a positive candidate experience and robust selection. This section covers the practicalities of inviting and managing candidates for interview.
- 12.2. When the manager changes a candidate's status to Invite to Interview, the system sends the invite (time/date/location).
- 12.3. HR will support senior-role assessments and complex selection exercises.
- 12.4. Internal applicants who leave employment after applying may still be considered if they were employed at the time of application, subject to reason for leaving (e.g., dismissal or live investigations may preclude appointment—seek HR advice).
- 12.5. Where strong candidates are identified, managers are encouraged to interview promptly rather than waiting for the closing date (with fairness maintained).
- 12.6. Communication processes must reflect current practice; verbal confirmation is not required where the system provides audit-proof invites and acknowledgements. Managers must ensure all invited candidates have confirmed attendance.
- 12.7. To promote fairness, inclusivity, and a positive candidate experience, interview questions may be shared with candidates prior to the interview. This approach ensures that the process assesses capability rather than memory recall and allows candidates - particularly those who are neurodivergent or require additional processing time - to prepare and provide their best responses.
 - Questions should be sent at least 48 hours before the interview unless exceptional circumstances apply.
 - Managers must ensure that all candidates receive the same set of questions to maintain consistency and fairness.
 - Candidates should be informed that while they may prepare, responses will still be assessed on relevance, depth, and alignment with role competencies.
 - HR will provide templates and guidance for sharing questions securely and consistently.

13. Interview Selection Tools

- 13.1. An interview must form the core part of every recruitment and selection process. For many posts, a structured interview will be sufficient as the sole method of assessment for others, particularly more senior, technical roles or require specialist skills, a more robust selection process may be appropriate. This may include additional assessments or testing. Selection tools should be proportionate to the role's level and the critical competencies required. This section explains the options available and how to select the most appropriate methods.
- 13.2. Selection methods must be matched to the criteria for the role, ensuring validity, fairness, and inclusivity.
- 13.3. Assessment tools may include:
- Individual presentation;
 - Work samples/reports (submitted in advance);
 - Psychometric assessments;
 - General cognitive ability tests;
 - Aptitude tests;
 - Skills/ability assessments;
 - Leaderless group exercises;
 - Structured interviews (with competency/behavioural questions);
 - Phone/virtual/video interviews.
- 13.4. When choosing assessment tools, consider:
- The seniority and leadership demands of the role
 - The technical competence required
 - The behavioural competence required
 - The time and effort required versus the risk of poor selection
 - Available resources and budget
- 13.5. Ensure that all selection tools and assessments do not directly or indirectly discriminate against protected groups. Reasonable adjustments must be offered to candidates who require them, including neurodivergent applicants.
- 13.6. HR can advise on and facilitate preferred assessment techniques. External assessors may be engaged for specific tests where appropriate.
- 13.7. Where appropriate, combine multiple assessment methods to improve validity and reduce bias. For junior roles, a structured interview may be sufficient.
- 13.8. Candidates must be notified in advance if additional assessments or selection tools will be used and provided with information about reasonable adjustments available.
- 13.9. Care must be taken to ensure that selection methods do not unfairly discriminate. Where a candidate is known to have a disability that may put him/her at disadvantage, the panel should make reasonable adjustments to the selection

methods to enable the candidate to participate fairly. Proposed selection methods should be discussed with HR. See the [Recruitment Toolkit](#) for more information.

14. Panel Diversity and Independent Members

- 14.1. For continuity and consistency, it will be usual for the same managers who were involved in shortlisting to also sit on the interview panel. Under no circumstances should a manager interview alone.
- 14.2. To reduce bias and ensure fair selection, interview panels should be as diverse as possible, reflecting a range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

Panel composition:

- Consider, where possible, including at least one independent panel member from outside the recruiting service, for both internal and external interviews, permanent and temporary roles.
 - If used, the independent panel member should not have direct involvement with the role
 - Panel diversity should be considered in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, neurodiversity, and other protected characteristics wherever possible.
 - For short-term interim or contractor assignments, service area-only panels may be used, but diversity is still encouraged.
- 14.3. Observers on recruitment panels must not participate in the decision-making process.
 - 14.4. Where a first-time recruiter is involved as part of their management development, there must be at least 2 other experienced recruiting managers to ensure robust decision making and provide support.
 - 14.5. For apprentice roles, it is recognised that the interview process can feel particularly daunting for candidates. Therefore:
 - Panels should be kept as small and supportive as possible while maintaining fairness and compliance.
 - Consider including a manager familiar with apprenticeship pathways or a mentor to help create a positive and encouraging environment.
 - Avoid overly formal settings and ensure clear communication of expectations to reduce anxiety for candidates.

15.The Interview

- 15.1. The interview is a central component of the recruitment process. This section provides guidance on conducting interviews that are fair, structured, and effective in assessing candidates.
- 15.2. The recruiting manager chairs the panel which must comprise of at least two members, including one with Safer Recruitment training. For senior/sensitive roles, include an independent panel member to enhance impartiality and reduce bias.
- 15.3. HR attends where there is an extenuating need or dependent on seniority.
- 15.4. Interviews assess presentation/communication, skills, experience, behaviours, and cultural alignment.
- 15.5. Use behavioural/competency questions (e.g., STAR); link to templates on the Intranet.
- 15.6. Recognise interviews are formal and may not perfectly reflect workplace behaviour— consider complementary assessments where relevant.
- 15.7. Plan interviews carefully; use the Interview Questions template.
- 15.8. Keep interviews fair, objective, and structured; base questions on JD/ES.
- 15.9. Allow candidates to elaborate; avoid excessive yes/no questions unless clarifying facts.
- 15.10. Ensure tone and set-up match seniority.
- 15.11. Observe relevant body language while avoiding subjective bias.
- 15.12. Record notes factually and appropriately; records may be audited or subject to FOI.
- 15.13. For safer recruitment, probe and record explanations for employment/training gaps, anomalies, and concerns.
- 15.14. Verification of documents (originals) must occur before start date and is ideally completed at interview where feasible:
 - Identity;
 - Right to work in the UK;
 - Relevant qualifications;
 - Professional memberships.

Remote/Hybrid Interviews

If interviews are virtual (Teams/online), in-person verification of RTW/DBS evidence is mandatory before employment commences.

Reasonable Adjustments

All candidates have the right to request reasonable adjustments. Managers must consider adjustments in interview and assessments (with HR/OH input where appropriate).

16. References and Post Selection Checks

16.1. The Council reserves the right to undertake all necessary pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of the applicant for the job in question. Before confirming an appointment, it is essential to carry out thorough pre-employment checks. This section details the reference and vetting processes required to ensure candidate suitability.

16.2. References

- References provide additional information on suitability and validate candidate claims.
- Where a candidate has completed a minimum of three years' continuous service with their current or most recent employer, one professional reference covering this period is normally sufficient.
- Where a candidate does not have three years' continuous service, a minimum of two references is required.
- For roles eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, the Council may require additional references or safeguarding assurances where necessary to support a robust risk assessment.
- One referee must be the candidate's current or last employer (or last place of study/overarching agency if never employed).
- Character references must be from a professional position (e.g., teacher, manager, supervisor, or other professional role).
- Referees must not be relatives or partners.
- HR requests references after a verbal conditional offer.
- Agency workers provide references via the agency.
- HR may request additional references if initial ones are insufficient.
- Conditional offers may be made subject to satisfactory references. Employment must not commence until references are received and risk assessed. If references are delayed, managers must consult HR to decide whether to defer start or proceed with documented risk mitigations (e.g., supervision, probation targets).

16.3. Where a candidate has limited or no employment history (e.g., school leavers, college leavers, individuals entering the workforce for the first time), the following adjusted requirement applies:

- One reference is required.
- This reference may come from:
 - A teacher, tutor, or lecturer
 - A form tutor or head of year
 - A work experience supervisor
 - A volunteering or community leader

- A professional individual who has known the candidate in a non-personal capacity

The reference must not be provided by a relative, partner, or friend. Where reference information is minimal due to lack of work experience, HR and the recruiting manager may consider additional safeguards (e.g., enhanced supervision, defined probation targets).

16.4. Health clearance:

- Successful candidates must complete a health questionnaire and, where appropriate, obtain medical clearance confirming fitness for the role.

16.5. Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Registration:

- Where required for the role, original certificates and/or evidence of professional registration must be verified.

16.6. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Check:

- Where appropriate to the post, a DBS check must be completed and deemed satisfactory before employment commences.
- In exceptional circumstances where employment starts before the DBS check is received, managers must ensure the individual does not undertake any duties that require a DBS clearance until the check is confirmed as satisfactory.

16.7. Right to Work in the UK Check:

- All candidates must provide evidence of their right to work in the UK, in line with statutory requirements.

16.8. Driving Licence Check:

- Where driving is an essential requirement of the role, a valid driving licence and, where applicable, insurance, tax, and MOT documentation must be verified.

17. Record Keeping

17.1. Recruitment records for unsuccessful candidates must be retained for 12 months post-decision, after which they should be securely destroyed. This retention period is necessary to:

- Provide feedback to candidates upon request;
- Defend against potential discrimination claims or Employment Tribunal challenges, as claims can be brought within three months of the alleged act (with possible extensions);

- Maintain evidence of fair and consistent decision-making throughout the process.

After this period, all records must be securely and confidentially destroyed in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

17.2. For successful candidates, all recruitment documentation (e.g., application forms, interview notes) become part of their **employment file** and should be retained:

- While employed, and
- For **up to 6 years** after their employment ends, in alignment with the Limitation Act 1980 and data protection principles.

18.Appointment

18.1. The recruiting manager issues a verbal conditional offer; subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. HR undertakes the necessary pre-employment checks and, once complete, issues the contract of employment.

18.2. The recruiting manager is responsible for ensuring that all required onboarding arrangements (for example ICT equipment, system access and induction requirements) are requested through the appropriate process or portal in place at the time

18.3. Managers must notify unsuccessful interviewed candidates (system/email).

18.4. The recruiting manager must provide objective and constructive feedback to all interviewed candidates before rejection emails are sent, to ensure a positive candidate experience and acknowledge the time invested in the process. Feedback should focus on strengths, areas for development, and alignment with role requirements. For internal candidates, offer a debrief session and signpost development opportunities to support career progression.

19.Safer Recruitment

19.1. Safer recruitment practices are designed to protect vulnerable groups and maintain high safeguarding standards. This section explains the Council's approach to safer recruitment.

19.2. The Councils take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people, and adults at risk, through safer recruitment and verification. Panels must include at least one person trained in Safer Recruitment.

19.3. Pre-selection checks for all posts include:

- Up-to-date, complete CV (probe gaps at interview);
- Criminal records self-disclosure;
- Where appropriate, DBS consent and checks;

- Identity and qualification substantiation.

19.4. Upon verbal conditional offer, references must be sought and received satisfactorily before confirming the unconditional offer.

20. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

(See detailed guidance on the Intranet Recruitment page.)

- 20.1. Certain roles require additional checks to ensure the safety of service users. This section outlines the requirements and procedures for Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- 20.2. Standard/Enhanced/Enhanced with barred lists checks apply for roles engaging with children/young people/adults at risk in regulated activity (SVGA 2006; PoFA 2012).
- 20.3. Basic DBS may be used for other roles where appropriate. The Councils do not accept checks provided by previous employers or other external activities.
- 20.4. For roles requiring Enhanced or Enhanced + Regulated Activity, staff may be re-checked routinely every 3 years (or sooner where concerns arise).
- 20.5. HR maintains the DBS schedule and renewal programme.
- 20.6. A new DBS check is required for internal appointments into roles with DBS requirements, regardless of a current "live" disclosure.
- 20.7. Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) applies where individuals access government assets.
- 20.8. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA):
- 20.9. Generally, spent convictions must not be considered.
- 20.10. Exception: For ROA-exempt roles (per the Exceptions Order) where Standard/Enhanced DBS lawfully discloses spent convictions, these may be considered proportionately in line with safeguarding and fairness.

21. Agency Staff

- 21.1. Agency staff play an important role in supporting Council services. This section sets out the requirements for engaging and managing agency workers.
- 21.2. Agency workers must receive thorough induction, including corporate/departmental overview, information security, health & safety, code of conduct, etc.
- 21.3. Agency workers may apply for internal vacancies.
- 21.4. Under Agency Workers Regulations, after 12 continuous calendar weeks in the same role, agency workers are entitled to no less favourable treatment in basic employment/working conditions.

22. Politically Restricted Posts

- 22.1. Certain local government posts are politically restricted (LGHA 1989) under legislation. This section explains the implications for affected roles and the requirements for compliance.
- 22.2. Holders are barred from:
 - Holding elected office (except Parish/Town Councils);
 - Holding office in a political party;
 - Canvassing elections;
 - Speaking/writing publicly on party-political controversy.
- 22.3. If identified as politically restricted, this must be stated in adverts and written into the contract of employment. There is no right of appeal against designation.

23. Market Supplement

- 23.1. In certain circumstances, market supplements may be used to attract and retain staff in hard-to-fill roles. Where JE salary range lacks market competitiveness for hard-to-fill roles, Market Supplements may be agreed if evidenced.
- 23.2. Approval by Senior Leadership Team is required to apply any Market Supplement and they will be subject to review; see Market Supplement Guidance.

24. Beyond Recruitment (Induction & Onboarding)

- 24.1. A structured induction and onboarding process helps new employees settle in and become effective quickly. This section describes the Council's approach to induction and onboarding.
- 24.2. On Day 1, the new starter reports to their designated work base per contract; the manager meets and greets and arranges photo ID/security card.
- 24.3. Provide required PPE before duties commence.
- 24.4. Introduce to team and, where feasible, Service Manager/Assistant Director/Senior Management Team; familiarise with workplace.
- 24.5. Discuss key policies, procedures, safe systems of work; allocate time for familiarisation.
- 24.6. Ensure understanding of departmental policies and practices.
- 24.7. The recruiting manager is responsible for induction and ensures completion of the Recruitment & Induction Checklist.
- 24.8. Submit the Induction Completion form (normally at 4 weeks) via the HR & Payroll Portal.

24.9. For internal appointments, complete the formal induction documentation.

25. Feedback Mechanisms and Continuous Improvement

25.1. We are dedicated to providing a positive candidate experience and continuously improving our recruitment processes.

25.2. Feedback and improvement:

- All candidates should be offered the opportunity to provide feedback on their recruitment experience, for example via a post-interview survey.
- Feedback will be reviewed regularly by HR and recruiting managers to identify areas for improvement and inform future policy updates.
- Candidates who are unsuccessful should be offered constructive feedback and signposting to development opportunities.

25.3. The Council will review this policy at least every three years, or sooner if required, incorporating candidate and manager feedback to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

26. Data Protection

The Council processes personal data in accordance with its Data Protection policy. Data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment exercise effectively to decide to whom to offer the job. Inappropriate access or disclosure of job applicant data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy immediately.

27. Fraud and Dishonesty Prevention

Recruitment plays an active role in fraud prevention. All recruitment and selection activities must comply with the Council's Counter Fraud Policy and associated procedures. Hiring managers must ensure that all information provided by applicants is accurate and complete. Any concerns regarding false declarations, dishonesty, forged or misleading documentation, or any activity that may constitute fraud must be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's Counter Fraud Policy.

28. Policy Review

The Recruitment Policy will be reviewed regularly, and proposed changes will be recommended to the Board. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for oversight, ensuring fair and transparent recruitment processes are consistently applied across departments, reviewing and approving exceptions to standard procedures, monitoring

recruitment metrics (including time-to-hire, cost-per-hire, and diversity statistics), championing inclusive hiring, and supporting hiring managers in best practice.

Appendices – Guidance & Checklist

A. Recruitment Checklist

[PSPS Recruitment and Induction Checklist.pdf](#)

- Necessity to fill vacancy established.
- Role signed off; budget agreed.
- JD, pay, and T&Cs up to date.
- JE review necessary?
- JD/ES current and representative.
- Vacancy Management form completed.
- Corporate advert drafted.
- No discriminatory content in JD/ES/advert/selection.
- Shortlisting process free of bias.
- Process accommodates disabled candidates (Disability Confident).
- Scoring systems agreed by panel in advance (what constitutes a “5”).
- Weighting reflects job requirements fairly.
- Consider redeployment/ringfencing opportunities; advertise only if appropriate.
- Advertising medium cost-effective and relevant.
- Application data sufficiency; add screening questions if needed.
- Selection method determined/approved (interview/tests/assessments).
- Selection methods validated, accurate and job-relevant.
- Reasonable adjustments considered and recorded.
- Timeline planned; candidates informed of key dates.
- Interview format and questions planned; panel confirmed.
- HR requested references (successful candidates); received/scrutinised.
- Conditional offer made.
- Conditions met; unconditional offer issued.
- Offer accepted and start date agreed.
- Contract issued.

- Unsuccessful candidates informed.
- Induction processes established.
- Signed contract returned.
- ICT equipment/user profile requested/confirmed.
- Induction plan prepared.
- Initial work plan designed.
- Workplace buddy assigned.
- Probation meetings scheduled.

B. Inclusive Interview Preparation (Optional)

Purpose: To support inclusive recruitment—especially for neurodiverse candidates or those disclosing disability/anxiety—managers may share selected interview questions in advance.

When to consider:

- Candidate has disclosed disability/neurodiversity.
- Roles with high-pressure technical questions.
- To promote transparency and reduce anxiety.

How to apply:

- Share a selection of key questions (not all) 24–48 hours before interview.
- Include context/expectations (e.g., use STAR format).
- Keep consistency across all candidates for the role.
- Consult HR for senior/sensitive roles.

Template message to candidates:

“To support your preparation, we’re sharing a few of the interview questions in advance. This is part of our commitment to inclusive recruitment. You may be asked additional questions during the interview.”

Notes: No legal restriction prevents sharing; public sector practice increasingly supports it. Balance benefits (reduced anxiety, better quality responses, fairness for under-represented groups) against risks (over-rehearsed answers, reduced spontaneity).

C. Ringfenced Roles (Internal) & Redeployment

Ringfencing may be used in appropriate circumstances (e.g., Managing Change outcomes, business restructure, at-risk groups, maternity/adoption/shared parental leave protections) to ensure fair opportunities for existing employees.

Redeployment principles: Offer suitable alternative employment where possible; assess ability to carry out the role with reasonable support/training rather than competitive “best candidate” selection.

Follow the Managing Change Policy for eligibility, scope, selection, and appointment.

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) may be used for ringfenced roles; ensure clear timelines and selection criteria.

If a role remains unfilled after 6 months, seek further approval (AD/SLT) to confirm approach (readvertise/re-scope/market supplement/training pathway).

D. Interview Panels & Scoring Matrices

Panels must include at least two members and one Safer Recruitment-trained member.

For senior/sensitive roles, include an independent panel member. This may also be appropriate when there are internal only recruitment campaigns or if there are a high volume of internal applicants.

Agree scoring matrices and “what a 5 looks like” before interviews to secure consistency.

Record scores and rationales; maintain audit trail. Keep notes factual and suitable as this information may be disclosable to the candidate under a data subject access request.

E. Reasonable Adjustments (Selection & Interview)

Proactively invite adjustment requests in adverts, invites, and at scheduling.

Examples: extra time, accessible rooms, questions in advance, alternative formats, quiet waiting areas, breaks, assistive tech.

Consult HR (and Occupational Health) where needed; decisions must be proportionate, fair, and recorded.

F. Remote/Hybrid Working Consideration

Prefer face-to-face interviews where reasonable; if virtual, ensure parity and access.

RTW and DBS identity checks must be verified in person before employment starts, even if interviews were virtual.

G. Advertising Exceptions & Direct Offers

Managers must consider whether all roles need advertising. Exceptions may include ringfenced redeployment, suitable alternative employment, or business continuity cases.

Where managers seek to directly offer (without advertising), this must be justified, approved by AD/SLT, and compliant with equality, transparency, and audit requirements.

New or substantially changed roles must be advertised subject to JE where grading is pending.

H. Secondments (Including Cross-Council)

[Managers Guide for requirements to share a role across the Partnership](#)

Secondment agreements require compliance checks (RTW, DBS if applicable, data security, payroll implications, line-management protocols).

Cross-Council secondments must align with Section 113 arrangements and relevant Council governance, see reference point Q.

Employees Leaving One Council to Take Up a Role in Another Within the Partnership

Where an employee resigns from one Council within the Partnership and is appointed to a role in another Council within the Partnership, the following principles apply:

This is not a secondment

Once an employee accepts a role with another Council within the Partnership, this becomes:

- a standard recruitment and appointment process, and
- employment with a new legal employer.

A Section 113 agreement is not applicable in this scenario.

Employment Continuity

Local Government continuous service will normally be preserved in line with:

- the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order, and
- local HR policies across the Partnership.

Managers must ensure start/end dates are processed accurately to protect service records.

Compliance and Onboarding Requirements

The receiving Council must still complete:

- Right to Work verification
- DBS checks (where required)
- Pre-employment declarations and references
- IT/data access setup and mandatory security briefings
- New payroll and contractual arrangements

Even within the Partnership, each Council must meet its own statutory employer obligations.

Notice Periods and Handover

Employees must:

- resign from their current Council following standard notice requirements, and
- agree a handover plan with their manager to ensure service continuity.

Managers should work collaboratively across Councils to support smooth transition.

Governance and Recruitment Compliance

The move must follow:

- the receiving Council's standard recruitment and selection procedures
- the agreed Partnership Recruitment Protocol
- appropriate approval routes for creating/filling posts

No employee should transfer between Councils without a completed recruitment process and formal offer.

I. Right to Work (RTW) Guidance

Follow the RTW guidance on the Intranet/SharePoint (statutory documents, verification process, and record-keeping).

Originals must be seen and verified; copying and retention per Data Protection schedules.

J. Shortlisting Templates & Fair Process

Use the Shortlisting template (Intranet Recruitment page).

Keep documented, evidence-based decisions; ensure consistency with JD/ES.

K. Advert Compliance Checklist

- ✓ Corporate template used; department and role overview included.
- ✓ Benefits and flexible/hybrid arrangements (where applicable).
- ✓ DBS level (checked via eligibility tool) and political restriction status stated.
- ✓ Disability Confident commitment included (logo on careers page where platform limits apply).
- ✓ Armed Forces Covenant: vacancy posted on Forces Families Jobs.
- ✓ English language requirement included for public-facing roles.
- ✓ Development/Trainee pathway details (duties, salary, progression, learning support).
- ✓ Closing date (or advertising period) and application instructions.
- ✓ Inclusive adjustments invitation statement included.

L. Shortlisting & Scoring Matrix (Guidance)

[Shortlisting Candidates](#)

- Define essential vs desirable criteria; shortlist by essential.
- Agree weights and scoring definitions in advance (e.g., 0–5 scale).
- Apply scoring consistently; record evidence (application references).
- Use tie-break rules agreed pre-panel (e.g., highest weighted competence).
- Record Disability Confident considerations and adjustments.

M. Reasonable Adjustments (Examples)

Extra time; breaks; accessible formats (large print, plain English); questions shared in advance (selected subset); assistive tech; environment adaptations; interview scheduling flexibility.

N. Sharing Interview Questions in Advance (Manager Guide)

[SELCP Guidance for Managers- Sharing Interview Questions in Advance.pdf](#)

- Eligibility/When: disability disclosure, neurodiversity, technical roles, transparency aims.
- Scope: share selected key questions only; 24–48 hours prior; include STAR guidance.
- Fairness: apply consistently across candidates for the same role; consult HR for senior/sensitive roles.
- Template message provided in Section A.

O. Recruitment Flowchart (Summary)

[SELCP- Recruitment Process Flowchart V3.pdf](#)

P. Ringfencing & Redeployment (Overview)

Follow Managing Change Policy for eligibility, process and appointment.

Use EOIs with clear timelines/criteria; appoint based on ability to perform with support, not competitive “best candidate” selection.

Maternity/adoption/shared parental leave protections apply.

Re-approval required if unfilled after 6 months.

Q. Cross-Council Secondment Guidance & Section 113 Requirements

When Section 113 Documentation Is Required

Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 must be completed whenever an employee of one local authority will be working for, or placed at the disposal of, another local authority.

You must complete Section 113 documentation if:

- The secondee’s home employer and host organisation are different local councils; and
- The secondee will be managed, directed, or performing duties for the host council

Why Section 113 Is Needed

Section 113 ensures:

- The host council has legal authority to direct and manage the secondee.
- Employment responsibility remains clear (the home council remains the employer).
- Liability, insurance cover, and health & safety duties are formally allocated.
- Continuity of service and terms & conditions are protected for the employee.
- Both councils comply with audit and governance standards.

Documentation Managers Must Complete for All Secondments

Managers must ensure the following are completed before the secondee starts in post:

Mandatory Compliance Checklist:

- ✓ Right to Work verification
- ✓ DBS clearance (if the role requires it)
- ✓ Data access and information governance briefings
- ✓ Clarified payroll arrangements (who pays, how, and from which budget)
- ✓ Agreed line-management and supervision arrangements
- ✓ Section 113 agreement (for cross-Council secondments only)
- ✓ Clear return-to-post terms agreed with the employee and home manager

Completed documentation must be stored in line with HR requirements and system workflows.

Manager Responsibilities

- Always use the latest secondment templates and guidance (available on the Intranet Recruitment page).
- Seek HR advice where:
 - duties differ significantly between councils,
 - supervision sits outside the home authority, or
 - the secondment may become permanent.

HR must be notified at the earliest opportunity to ensure compliance.

Summary for Managers

If the secondee is working for another council → Section 113 is required.

If both councils simply share central HR → Section 113 is still required.

If the councils are one legal employer → Section 113 is not required.