**UNIT 1**

**Recruitment Manual – step by step guide**

RECRUITMENT PROCESS ACTION PLAN

* 1. Why has the Recruitment Manual – Step by Step Guide been produced?

How a Council handles their recruitment and selection process is the key introduction for prospective staff to the Council’s culture, how it works with its staff and how it provides its services. The recruitment experience can often determine whether a candidate actually takes the job even if it’s offered on the terms they seek.

To do it properly takes time and effort and, as with all major decisions, the Council needs to invest properly in the process. A Council’s recruitment and selection procedure must be legally sound, thorough and professional in order to make the right appointment. Consistency of approach and the use of best practise will help choose the right candidate and reduce the risk of successful challenge to the process once completed.

This Recruitment Manual will help your Council and those responsible for, or involved in, your recruitment and selection processes. The unit by unit format focuses on the key stages required starting by reviewing the need for post of the Clerk to the Council to offering and contracting the successful candidate to the post.

Given the pitfalls and the challenges that are around for you as an employer and the employment rights available to candidates it is important that everyone responsible for, or involved in, staff recruitment and selection operate within an agreed and structured recruitment process and are aware of and understand the key techniques and issues involved.

Following this guide could reduce the risk to successful challenge, should your recruitment and selection practice be challenged by candidates and/or at an Employment Tribunal. Even more importantly, having a fair and fully inclusive recruitment process will allow you to take advantage of all the talent and experience available, and create a richly diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves.

In each of the 14 units of the manual key advice and recommended actions are given along with relevant guidance reflecting best practice. Where appropriate, a range of specimen forms and letters are included that allow you to customise everything to suit the circumstances of the vacancy.

Whilst the manual focuses mainly on the post of Clerk to the Council each unit may apply to any job and can be readily adapted.

Everyone responsible for or involved in the recruitment and selection of staff at any level should consider following the recommended process and guidance in all future appointments.

* 1. How does the Council avoid discrimination in the recruitment and selection process?

Every recruitment and selection process has to be:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **effective**
 | attracting candidates and distinguishing between those suitable and those who are not |
| * **efficient**
 | using the most cost-effective recruitment method |
| * **fair**
 | Maintaining and enhancing the Council’s reputation with existing and new staff by dealing fairly, openly and courteously with all applicants. |

There are inherent risks to the Council when operating the recruitment and selection process and the Council can suffer damaging claims of discrimination if it goes wrong and the recruitment process is handled improperly.

The potential claims for discrimination are now on the grounds of one of the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * sex
* race
* marriage and civil partnership
* age
* gender reassignment.
 | * pregnancy and maternity
* disability
* religion or belief
* sexual orientation
 |

Discrimination can be direct (a decision to discriminate knowing it would disadvantage someone from a protected group) or indirect (a recruitment and selection procedure or supporting documentation and selection criteria that inherently puts someone from a protected group at a disadvantage). Both apply to those perceived to be from a protected group or are disadvantaged against because they associate with a protected group.

Apart from these forms of discrimination there are other types of personal prejudice that have no place in a fair selection process; such as those associated with education, background, class, dress and appearance. These characteristics and unconscious bias should form no part of the decision-making process, unless they are genuinely relevant and justifiable in respect of the job and role concerned.

Apart from the legal implications, discrimination and prejudice:-

* are a bad use of potential resources
* limit the range of potentially suitable candidates available to the Council
* cause resentment and low morale
* are bad for the Council’s image
* have no place in the selection process or employment in general.

It is important that you have sound and thorough equal opportunities, equality and inclusions policies in place and observe them fully at every stage and in all actions during the recruitment and selection process.

* 1. **What is contained in the Recruitment Manual – Step by Step Guide?**

The remainder of this Recruitment Manual is divided into a number of further units which cover primarily the following matters:-

* the post of Clerk to the Council
* example Staffing Committee – terms of reference
* preparing the job description
* preparing the person specification
* use of application forms
* recruitment information pack
* advertising and media guidance
* short-listing guidance
* selection and interviewing guidance
* selection assessment guidance
* appointment process
* making adjustments, providing aids and adaptations for specific candidates/appointees
* induction and probation.

All or any of these sections can be used separately and adapted for your Council. Throughout each unit, the details that may be customised to suit individual or the Council circumstances are highlighted in **blue**.

As mentioned above whilst the Recruitment Manual is designed primarily to assist with the recruitment of the Clerk to the Council and although it extends in places to the post of Responsible Financial Officer, the principles and process are appropriate for all posts on the Council’s establishment.

* 1. **How should the Council plan and organise the recruitment process?**

It is helpful to start by developing an action plan scheduling the key events. A specimen is enclosed at **Appendix 1(a)** which will help you plan the whole process to suit your Council and once adapted it should be used to monitor progress to keep to your required timetable and form a record as part of the documentary trail should any subsequent challenge be forthcoming.

* 1. **Further Help**

If you require training, help or any other assistance with your recruitment and selection processes or have any questions on anything in the Recruitment Manual please email your county association.

Updated September 2022

**Appendix 1 (a) – Specimen Recruitment Process Action Plan**

**XXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL**

**APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL/OTHER POSTS**

**RECRUITMENT PROCESS ACTION PLAN**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Lead Responsibility** | **Target date** |
| Consider and confirm with the Council the need for the post and the rationale making the appointment |  |  |
| Agree recruitment timetable and action plan |  |  |
| Agree composition, scope and responsibilities of Selection Panel/Sub-Committee and then engage any required professional advisers |  |  |
| Review and, if necessary, update and re-evaluate the current recruitment/selection policies used by the Council checking particularly that no indirect discrimination arises |  |  |
| Create or update the Job Description and clarify reporting channels and responsibilities for the post checking particularly that no indirect discrimination arises |  |  |
| Create/update and agree the Person Specification for the post making sure that none of the criteria could directly or indirectly discriminate |  |  |
| Confirm the key terms and conditions of employment |  |  |
| Establish and agree the budget for recruitment |  |  |
| Develop advertisement and determine the timeframe and closing date |  |  |
| Consider and agree on the advertising and other media to be used checking that all parts of the community are accessed and able to respond (e.g. those with hearing or sight difficulties) |  |  |
| Obtain costs and agree advertising media to search the relevant marketplace  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prepare forms to record applications requested and received |  |  |
| Agree selection process including the interview location, dates and tests to be used using the Person Specification as the core selection tool |  |  |
| Define processes and responsibilities for short listing and selection interviews and exercises and tests to demonstrate the skills and aptitudes being sought avoiding direct or indirect discrimination |  |  |
| Arrange advert insertions in a variety of media |  |  |
| Prepare application form and recruitment information pack as suggested in this Manual |  |  |
| Develop short listing application analysis matrix against person specification that avoids direct or indirect discrimination |  |  |
| Make arrangements and prepare records for applications to be received and recorded confidentially |  |  |
| Following closing date, undertake short listing and selection of candidates for interview against short-listing matrix |  |  |
| Agree when and how to deal with obtaining references  |  |  |
| Inform unsuccessful candidates |  |  |
| Prepare interview schedule and invite short listed candidates to interview |  |  |
| Prepare interview questions and agree range of key questions to be asked of all candidates and allocate questions per panel member |  |  |
| Prepare the selection interview assessment matrix for completion by interviewers and ensure it avoids direct and indirect discrimination |  |  |
| Undertake selection interviews and assessment tests to make selection decision (if appropriate undertake initial interviews and then final interviews) avoiding direct or indirect discrimination |  |  |
| Make offer of employment subject to relevant pre-employment checks and agree start date |  |  |
| Prepare and issue contract of employment (Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment) |  |  |
| Consider any adjustments, aids or adaptations necessary to support the new employee e.g. accommodating specific needs due to having a disability, religious beliefs, pregnancy, being transgender, etc |  |  |
| Make arrangements for appropriate checks, including legal working, qualifications etc, prior to employment commencing |  |  |
| Advise unsuccessful candidates and be prepared to justify decisions not to appoint and advise on how long details will be kept (DPA 2018) |  |  |
| Map out induction and probation period monitoring processes and share with successful candidate |  |  |
| Prepare for successful candidate commencement date and undertake induction process |  |  |
| Monitor performance and suitability during probation period and take appropriate action if issues arise or confirm appointment following successful probation period |  |  |