

Application form guidance notes

If you need any help to complete this form, please contact the HR Service email address stated in the job advert, or telephone the HR Operations and Data team on 03000 267247 (24-hour answerphone service) or fax us on 0191 328 0067 (outside the UK, please replace the first 0 with +44). They can provide information and application forms in other formats. They can also help you complete your application form and provide details of access to Council buildings.

Please read this information before completing the Application Form

These notes are intended to help you complete the application form section by section. The person specification provided with the details of the post you are applying for lists the criteria against which each candidate will be assessed. Invitation for interview is based on the information contained in the Application Form – complete it in a well-planned and positive way, use words such as 'I plan', 'I am responsible for'. Applicants who do not meet the essential criteria on the person specification will not be short-listed. Applicants with disabilities will be invited for interview if the essential criteria are met.

General Points

Please complete the form using type or black ink (hard copy only).

Please check that the form is for the correct post and take note of the closing date. If you are unable to complete the application form before the closing date, for example, due to requiring the form in a large print, then contact the HR Operations and Data team by emailing the HR Service email address quoted in the job advert.

Please ensure that you include as much relevant information as possible on the application form. CVs will not be considered for short-listing purposes. If little or no information is provided on the application form it will be impossible for the Recruitment Panel to assess your suitability and therefore progression to the short-list for interview will be unlikely.

If you do not have enough space on the form at any point you may continue on separate sheets of paper, however, personal details, for example a name, should not be included on any supplementary sheets.

Equal Opportunities

Please complete this section to enable us to monitor our recruitment process in relation to our Equal Opportunities Policy. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidence and will be used only for statistical purposes to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly. This part of the application form will be detached before the selection process begins.

First Section

This section of the application form asks for some basic details about you and will be detached before the selection process begins.

Details of your surname, forename, title and address and telephone numbers (mobile and work if convenient) are required together with an email address (if convenient).

If the post is open to job share, please indicate if you wish to apply in a job share capacity.

Please state where you saw the job advertised (hard copy applications only).

Indicate whether you consider yourself to be a person with a disability. This may include a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Longstanding means that it has lasted, or is likely to last, for over a year. If you answer yes, please detail any specific requirements to assist us with an interview so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

Looked After Young People or Care Leavers are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria of the post. Please indicate whether you are a Looked After Young Person or a Care Leaver, for example are you looked after by a Local Authority for example Durham County Council or are you a Care Leaver up to 25 years old? If so, please declare this on your application form.

Indicate whether you are serving/have served in the regular armed forces and meet the following criteria:

- You are currently serving in the regular armed forces and are within 12 weeks of your discharge date; and
- You meet the essential criteria for the advertised post or alternatively
- The regular armed forces was your last long-term employer and no more than 3 years has elapsed since you left the regular armed forces; and
- You meet the essential criteria for the advertised post.

When completing the Important Information Box about Criminal Convictions. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables criminal convictions to become 'spent' or ignored after a 'rehabilitation period'. A rehabilitation period is a set length of time from the date of conviction. After this period, with certain exceptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention the conviction when applying for a job or obtaining insurance, or when involved in criminal or civil proceedings. Cautions, reprimands and final warnings are considered 'spent' immediately they are given. Some jobs are exempted from this Act. If this post requires an Enhanced or Standard Disclosure (refer to advert and job description) then you should provide details of ALL convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings. Where the post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure, other relevant non-conviction information, such as police enquiries and pending prosecutions should also be declared. If this post does not require an Enhanced or Standard Disclosure, then details of 'unspent' convictions only are required. Relevant criminal convictions and other associated information will be discussed at the interview to assess job related risk. In 2013 the DBS reviewed the information that is shared with Registered Bodies and have filtered information that would have previously been disclosed.

The length of the rehabilitation period depends on the sentence given – not the offence committed. For a custodial sentence, the length of time actually served is irrelevant: the rehabilitation period is decided by the original sentence.

Custodial sentences of more than 2½ years can never become spent. The following sentences become spent after fixed periods from the date of conviction:

Sentence	Rehabilitation period	Rehabilitation period
Prison sentences, including suspended sentences, youth custody (abolished in 1988) and detention in a young offender institute, of 6 months or less	7 years	3 ½ years
Prison sentences, including suspended sentences, youth custody (abolished in 1988) and detention in a young offender institute, of more than 6 months to 2 ½ years	10 years	5 years
Borstal (abolished in 1983)	7 years	7 years
Detention centres (abolished in 1988)	3 years	3 years
Fines, even if subsequently imprisoned for fine default: Community rehabilitation order Compensation Community punishment order Community punishment and rehabilitation order Curfew orders Drug treatment and testing	5 years	2 ½ years
Absolute discharge	6 months	6 months

With some sentences the period varies:

Sentence	Rehabilitation period
Probation for people convicted on or after 3 February 1995 (from which date the rehabilitation period for a probation order was changed under the terms of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994), supervision, care order, conditional discharge or bind over	1 year or until the order expires (whichever is longer)
Attendance centre orders	1 year after the order expires
Hospital orders (with or without a restriction order)	5 years or 2 years after the order expires (whichever is longer)

When completing the Declaration box: under the Council's new Constitution you are required to state in writing whether to the best of your belief you are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, step-child, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing Councillor or Officer (any employee) of the Council or a partner of such persons. Canvassing of Members of the Council or any Committee of the Council or any appointing officer directly or indirectly for any appointment with the Council is prohibited and shall, if deemed appropriate, disqualify you for that appointment.

After reading the guidance notes including the information regarding Criminal Convictions you need to sign and date the Declaration to declare that the information you have given on the Application Form is true in all respects. If you choose to send the application form electronically you will be asked by the Lead Officer (or the relevant Recruitment Officer) to sign and date the Declaration when you attend for interview.

'Right to Work in the UK'

The Asylum and Immigration Act of 1996 requires employers to ensure that anyone who is taken on as an employee has the 'Right to Work in the UK'. The successful candidate will be asked to provide documentary proof of their 'Right to Work in the UK'.

Education and Qualifications

Please provide full and accurate details about your education, paying particular attention to the grade achieved in each examination. All qualifications must be supported by relevant certificates, but please do not attach certificates. If successful, these will be requested at a later date.

Employment Details

Please provide details of your present post as requested. Please ensure you give us your current salary.

Full Employment History

Please provide details of the previous posts you have held, with the most recent first. Please provide reasons for any gaps in your employment history.

Person Specification

Please use this section to demonstrate that you have the essential, and where applicable, desirable experience, skills and knowledge as stated on the person specification of the post for which you are applying.

Referees

References will only be requested for the successful candidate, but you must note that your appointment will be subject to satisfactory references.

For positions in contact with children and vulnerable adults, every effort will be made to obtain all necessary references from any or previous employers prior to interview on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, before interview, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up at interview. The job advert and the application form will state that the Council reserves the right to seek references prior to interview and this may include references from your current or most recent employing local authority. All references will be verified by the Council with the referee to ensure authenticity.

Give name, job title, and relationship to referee and address of two people, who must know you well to whom a reference may be made. Referee 1 should be your present (or most recent) employer, or if you are a recent school leaver, should be the Head Teacher of your last school. Next of kin or immediate relatives should not be named as referees.

Please note appointment will only be confirmed subject to satisfactory references.

Please note that:

- No Elected Member of the Council will provide any testimonial for a candidate in support of an application for appointment with the Council;
- No Officer of the Council will provide any testimonial for an external candidate in support of an application for appointment with the Council;
- Next of kin/immediate relatives should not be named as a referee.

Additional Information

This section is for you to provide any additional skills information about yourself not already covered by the other sections, which you feel is relevant to this post. This may include any particular skills and qualities which will help us to assess your suitability. The skills and qualities you include may be from work, on work experience or in a voluntary or other setting. Please use continuation sheets if necessary.

Please remember that only candidates who fulfil the requirements on the person specification will be considered for the vacancy. Have you checked that you match these requirements and told us how you match them (including providing real examples to demonstrate how you meet the criteria we have asked for)?

Applications submitted by hard copy only

Please check that you have completed your vacancy reference number, post title, service/location and closing date and all personal details on the first section of the application form and that you have signed and dated the Confidential declaration. When submitting an electronic application form you will be asked to sign and date the Declaration if invited to the interview stage.

Complaints

The aim of the recruitment and selection procedure is to afford every candidate a fair and appropriate process which accommodates individual needs and ensures that every appointment is made on merit in an effective and consistent way. We welcome any feedback on the procedure.

If you feel you were not afforded this provision, then you should contact the Lead Officer responsible for the appointment. This must be done within five working days from when you received the interview decision/interview feedback or from when you were notified you had not secured an interview. You should state clearly why you believe you were not given this opportunity.

Should you require advice with regard to making a complaint, please contact the HR Operations and Data Team, Human Resources.

Thank you for your interest in a career with the Council.