



Offaly County Council

Recruitment and Selection Policy

January 2017

1. Statement

- 1.1 It is the policy of Offaly County Council to ensure that recruitment and selection procedures operate in an open and fair manner, in line with good practice and standards, employment and equality legislation and relevant circulars and departmental guidelines.
- 1.2 The Public Appointments Service is responsible for the filling of specified senior management local authority posts under the terms of their own separate recruitment and selection procedures. The filling of all other posts will be managed locally by the local authority through confined or open competitions, in line with this policy. From time to time, one local authority may by agreement recruit on behalf of a number of local authorities.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a robust framework, based around the core recruitment and selection principles outlined below, within which to facilitate the recruitment and selection of high calibre employees.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This recruitment and selection policy applies to candidates for **all competitions** including internal competition confined to existing employees of the local authority and covers all activities pertaining to the overall recruitment and selection process.

4. Legislative Requirements and Guidance

- 4.1 The Council has regard to all relevant legislative requirements and guidance in its recruitment and selection processes, including for example the following although this list is by no means exhaustive:
 - Local Government Acts, 2001 - 2014
 - Dept of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government circulars/guidelines
 - Equality Acts
 - Freedom Of Information legislation
 - Data Protection Acts

5. Core Principles

- 5.1 This recruitment and selection policy sets out the Council's commitment to comply with standards of best practice in its recruitment and selection processes and outlines the obligations and responsibilities of applicants who apply for employment with this Council.

The aim of this policy is to ensure a competitive recruitment process where criteria for judging suitability of candidates can be related directly to the qualifications, attributes, skills and competencies required to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post. It further aims to ensure that candidates are treated to a consistent standard and in a consistent manner through open and active communication, at all stages of the process.

This policy is based on the following core principles:

- *Probity*
- *Integrity*
- *Impartiality*
- *Fairness*
- *Reliability*
- *Ethical conduct*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Merit*
- *Best practice*
- *Transparency*
- *Fairness*

6. Equal Opportunities Statement

- 6.1 Offaly County Council is an equal opportunities employer and employment opportunities are accessible to all eligible applicants
- 6.2 The Council strives to promote a culture of equality and ensure that all candidates are selected on merit. The Council endeavours to ensure that the selection process does not provide unjustifiable advantage or disadvantage to any particular candidate or group of candidates. The recruitment and selection process embraces genuine equality of opportunity which will be integral to the process by which appointments are made.
- 6.3 The Council's employment opportunities are open to all, irrespective of a candidate's background, personal beliefs or circumstances. The Council endeavours to accommodate particular candidates needs where practicable, unless to do so

would be to unlawfully disadvantage another candidate. Applicants with disabilities are reasonably accommodated in so far as is practicable to ensure they have the opportunity to perform at their optimum level. This may include providing easily accessible interview facilities, agreeing an appropriately timed interview, arranging an alternative medical examination location or time, supplying or arranging for appropriate equipment.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Human Resources Department

The Council's Human Resources Department has overall responsibility to manage the recruitment and selection process.

7.2 Line Managers

Line Managers are responsible for supporting the Human Resources Department in the recruitment and selection process including developing the job specifications, duties and relevant competencies, short listing of applications, attending interview skills training and participating in interview boards both internally within the organisation and externally in other local authorities.

7.3 Candidates

Candidates in the recruitment process shall not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvas any person, with or without inducements
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

7.4 Candidates are responsible for providing verification of the education or other qualifications deemed necessary for the post as well as their identity.

7.5 Candidates should note that canvassing (*representations being made on or behalf of the candidate*) will disqualify them from competition and will result in their exclusion from the appointment process.

7.6 A third party shall not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

7.7 Conflict of Interest

Any person involved in a selection process who has a personal or familial relationship with an applicant shall immediately bring this to the attention of the Human Resources Department so as appropriate alternative arrangements can be made.

8. Eligibility Criteria and Education Qualifications

8.1 The Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government has responsibility for setting and approving eligibility qualifications for appointments to established local government posts. From time to time, new posts may be created locally by the local authority to which a locally agreed job specification, description and qualifications apply. Eligibility criteria and requirements shall be clearly outlined for all posts being filled.

8.2 *Verification of Education Qualifications*

For each advertised vacancy the Council makes the eligibility criteria available and **applicants shall have the responsibility** for providing relevant verification from the appropriate awarding authority or certifying body of the education qualifications deemed necessary for the post.

9. Job Description, Person Specification and Competencies

9.1 A job description/person specification and competency profile is developed for each post being filled.

9.2 *Job Description*

The job description will accurately reflect all elements of the post and qualifications.

9.3 *Person Specification*

The person specification shall state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge, experience and competencies that are required for the job, all of which shall be directly related to the role, and applied equally to all applicants.

9.4 *Competencies*

Competencies are the behaviour, skills and attitudes that underpin effective performance and provide a practical menu of the critical skills and visible 'on the job' behaviours that underpin effective 'on the job' performance. Specific competencies required for any post being filled will be included as part of each job description and specification

10. Communication of Vacancies

10.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that vacancies are communicated openly to afford equality of opportunity to all. The appropriate methods of communication for vacancies are selected for each post being filled.

- 10.2 Advertisements advising of the vacancy will indicate where full details and particulars are available from
- 10.3 To encourage diversity of applicants, vacancies being filled by open competition are advertised using at least **two** of the following taking into consideration the nature of the post:
- local authority website and/or Intranet
 - Local Government Jobs.ie
 - national press
 - local press
 - specialist journals
 - recruitment websites
 - employment agencies
 - university or other 3rd level institution careers services
 - professional bodies
 - representative organisations
 - other appropriate sources

11. Applications

- 11.1 The Council specifies the method of application in each job advertisement. Applications may be accepted in a variety of formats once accessible using standard office applications. Typical methods include delivery in person to the Human Resources Department, through the post or by email. Applications sent by post must be posted in sufficient time to ensure delivery by the specified closing date for receipt of completed applications. **Late applications in any format shall not be accepted.** The Council may request a number of copies of the application form from candidates for administrative purposes. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by the Council in writing by post or email.

12. Selection Procedure

The following are the key steps in the selection procedure

12.1 Screening

In the first instance, all applications will be screened for eligibility as per the job specification. Applicants who meet this criteria will be progressed to the next stage of the selection process. The local authority may request verification of education qualification such as result transcripts at this stage of the selection process.

12.2 **Short listing**

Where a large number of applications are received for a post, the Council reserves the right to shortlist as required. Short-listing will be based on the specific criteria and competencies as advertised for the post.

12.3 **Other Selection Methods**

The selection process may involve additional assessments, tests or interviews and applicants will be notified of these additional stages, if applicable.

12.4 **Interview Procedure**

Interviews shall be carried out in line with the agreed interview board procedures for each post.

13. **Panel**

- 13.1 For some competitions, a panel of successful candidates may be formed following final interview stage. The placement on a panel does not necessarily lead to a job offer. Panels where established may be used to fill both permanent and temporary posts that arise during the life of the panel based on order of merit.

The selection process will not be concluded until such time as satisfactory references have been obtained and appropriate checks completed i.e. Garda vetting, occupational health assessment, verification of education or other mandatory qualifications or requirements (e.g. driving licence) or relevant experience.

14. **Notification of Outcome of the Selection Procedure**

- 14.1 Candidates shall be notified of the outcome of any short listing procedure as soon as practicable following the completion of the process.
- 14.2 Candidates shall be notified of the outcome of their interview at the earliest possible date after the interview. If a candidate has been placed on a panel, the candidate shall be informed of their position on the panel. **The lifetime of any panel will generally be for one year from the date it is formed, but may be extended for a further period of up to one year at the Chief Executive's discretion.**

15. **Feedback to Candidates**

- 15.1 The Council offers feedback to candidates where requested on both the short-listing and interview stages of the process and responds to such requests in a timely and efficient manner.

16. Right to information and to review

- 16.1 Candidates have a right to information and a review of the various stages of the recruitment and selection procedure.
- 16.2 Where the candidate is dissatisfied with a decision being conveyed by the Head of the Human Resources Department, a **written request** for a review of that decision must be submitted within :

2 working days from the date of receipt of the decision

or

5 working days from the date of receipt of the decision where it relates to the **final stage** in the recruitment process

Addressed to: **Director of Services**
Human Resources
Aras an Chontae
Charleville Road
Tullamore
Co. Offaly

- 16.3 Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following the decision of the Director of Services , the candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the **process** in **writing** to the **Chief Executive, Offaly County Council**, setting out those aspects of the action or decision in relation to his/her candidature that he/she wishes to have reviewed. Where request for review relates to the **final stage** of the selection process, it must be received in **writing** within **10 working days** of the notification of the decision of the Director of Services for Human Resources. Where the decision relates to an **interim stage** of a selection process, the request must be received within **4 working days**. It should be noted that **request for review must pertain to concerns over the recruitment and selection process only and not the merits of any appointment.**

17. Appointment

- 17.1 Once a panel has been approved by the Chief Executive (or delegated official) an offer of employment will issue where an approved vacancy exists. Offers of employment shall be taken up within the specified timeframe and are subject to

satisfactory employment checks being completed. The terms and conditions of the appointment should be in accordance with employment and equality legislation and relevant departmental Circulars.

18. Employment Checks

The following employment checks shall be completed for successful candidates:

18.1 *Verification of Education Qualifications*

Verification of any education qualifications from relevant awarding/certifying body , i.e. results transcripts, shall be required from candidates before any job offer can be made.

18.2 *Garda Vetting*

Garda vetting will be sought for candidates whose post entailed engaging in 'relevant work' as defined in the relevant Children and Vulnerable Persons legislation.

18.3 *References*

The Council reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. The Council reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees. Information sought from referees shall be structured around the requirements of the job and the job description, person specification and/or competency profiles should be provided. Referees shall only be contacted with the candidate's consent. The information provided shall be treated as confidential and shall be used to verify information collected through the selection process. Documents relating to all applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

18.4 *Pre-employment Medical Assessment*

Where appropriate, candidates will be required to undergo a pre-employment medical assessment with the local authority's nominated Occupational Health Advisor as a condition of any job offer. The candidate will be responsible for the cost involved and a full refund will be made to the candidate following their commencement of their employment.

19. Employee Awareness

- 19.1 All employees of the Council are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Council's recruitment and selection policy which will be provided as part of induction and

general employee awareness activities. Employees may be required to acknowledge receipt of the recruitment and selection policy.

20. Infringements of Recruitment and Selection Procedures

- 20.1 If a candidate is found to have breached this procedure, then
- Where not appointed to a post, will be disqualified as a candidate
 - Where candidate has been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, they shall forfeit that appointment.
- 20.2 Any breach of recruitment and selection procedures may result in disciplinary action for council employees, up to and including termination of employment, in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

21. Freedom of Information and Data Protection

- 21.1 Records created, maintained and stored by the Council as part of the recruitment and selection process are subject to a range of legislation, including Freedom of Information and Data Protection. The Council shall also comply with relevant National Records Retention Policies.
- 21.2 All applications will be treated in strict confidence in line with the requirements of Freedom of Information legislation.

22. Monitoring and Review

- 22.1 The Council shall monitor the implementation of and compliance with this recruitment and selection policy and will review it on a regular basis.