

# **Recruitment and selection policy**

## **Introduction**

should be aware of their responsibilities in terms of good practice, current legislation and their commitment to equal opportunities.

All documentation and information relating to candidates will be treated as confidential and in

## Definition of terms

**SCC** Surrey County Council

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**SSC** Shared services centre

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Selection needs to be thought out and planned in accordance to the role. The recruiting manager must avoid the following: Ignoring the selection criteria, over reliance on any one aspect of the process and any form of prejudice. We must be able to demonstrate that arrangements for selection do not exclude certain groups of candidates and that the methods used are justifiable.

With all selection techniques, the selection panel need to be clear as to the desired outcome of using the technique. It is important to understand your objectives and ask yourself the following questions:

What does this method add to selection?

How will it help selection?

What are the difficulties?

Can it be done fairly?

Can the performance be rated fairly and consistently?

Is it a suitable tool for measuring a certain selection criterion?

## **Tools of selection and their effectiveness**

### Application forms & CVs

The Council mostly uses the standard application form for advertised posts but there may be some occasions where a CV is deemed more suitable. CVs should not be accepted when recruiting to posts within the application form.

### Job simulation (work sample) exercises

These are job related assessment tools, which allow candidates to demonstrate how they meet certain requirements in practice. They are best designed in-house to enable them to be job-specific, and are good for assessing behavioural competencies as well as application of relevant skills and knowledge. They are sometimes called "work sample" exercises. Candidates are likely to view these assessments as fair since they will mirror the actual tasks they may have to perform in the job. Some commonly used simulation exercises are presentations, in-tray exercises, written exercises, group discussions and role-play exercises.

In order to ensure that job-simulation exercises relate to the job being recruited to, it is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to compile the tasks to be included in these exercises. Further, as they are designed to simulate various aspects of the job, they must be clearly linked to the job profile, and a consistent scoring system should be devised and understood by all panel members/assessors.

### Presentations

If the role will entail giving presentations or public speaking, it would be relevant as part of the selection process to include a presentation, which will often be part of the interview. However, it would not be reasonable to ask candidates to make a presentation where this was not an important part of the role.

they have enough time to prepare the proposed topic. Specific information should include the following information:

The topic for the presentation (which should be relevant to an area of knowledge, awareness, understanding or expertise required for the job)

Whether or not a laptop, overhead projector, flip chart, etc. would be available for the presentation.

Ideally, candidates should be asked to inform the panel in advance what equipment they will require to deliver their presentation. Where a laptop is used, it is important to check compatibility of the software.

How long the presentation should be

**Examples of skills/competencies**, which may be assessed are:

**Oral communication** e.g. persuasiveness; verbal fluency and confidence in formal situations; ability to impart ideas or concepts or communicate vision; ability to analyse and articulate complex information in easily understood terms (this might involve candidates understanding a complex document, e.g. legal regulation).

**Specific areas of knowledge** required for the job.

**Planning and organising** assessed by how well the candidate structures the presentation and uses the limited time resource to get key messages across.

**Strategic thinking** e.g. the topic may assess the extent to which candidates are aware of the external environment and its impact on the organisation (i.e. political, legislative, demographic, financial, technological); and/or it may be designed to assess the extent to which candidates are prepared for professional working.

As mentioned above, a consistent scoring system should be devised and understood by all panel members. For an example, you are referred to the Presentation Record form.

### **In-tray and written exercises**

In-tray exercises simulate the types of demands and day-to-day issues an employee may face in actually doing the job. This can give a real insight into how someone will perform and identify any training needs. A well-designed in-tray exercise can assess problem-solving skills, time management and prioritisation, planning and organising, delegation skills, and so on.

In-tray exercises usually consist of a number of memos, e-

## Telephone interviews



references or adopting a policy of providing only the basic factual information e.g. dates of employment and title of post held. Therefore, reliance on references as a selection tool should be limited and should be used as a final check to the selection process, along with any other pre-employment checks for the post.

### **Assessment centres**

Selection techniques may be combined and applied together at events referred to as assessment centres. Such events normally last one to three days during which a group of candidates for a post will undertake a variety of tasks and be evaluated by multiple assessors. Assessment centres may use all of the selection tools described previously. The assessment centre process is designed to assess candidates against the key job criteria in as rigorous way as possible.

Assessment centres require a great deal of planning and require recruiting managers to be involved in the process from the beginning. The Chartered institute of personnel and development (CIPD) states that assessment centres can improve the predictability of selection processes when well designed with a clear job description and person specification in mind. They are valuable when there are many

## **Guidance and operating procedures**

### **Short-listing guidance**

#### **Short-listing considerations**

meet the essential criteria. A is sent out with the application pack for candidates to complete if applicable. Therefore, the hiring manager is responsible for ensuring this is checked at the short-listing stage and provisions are made for the interview/assessment. For further information, you are referred to the Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy.

If a post receives a high volume of applicants, it might be appropriate to hold preliminary or telephone interviews to provide an initial screening step by asking candidates a series of questions reflecting essential requirements for the job. Testing may also be an option for initial short-listing prior to an interview you are referred to Selection Guidance.

If in any doubt about the acceptability of overseas qualifications, advice should be sought from the appropriate professional body (where applicable), the Department of Education and Employment or the National Equivalence Unit of the British Council.

Discrimination must be avoided except in those vary rare circumstances where a religious or philosophical belief, sexual orientation, disability or age has already been identified as a genuine occupational qualification for the job under the terms of the relevant discrimination. However, this would have been identified and checked at the advertising stage of the process.

**Guidance and operating procedures**

**How to write interview questions**

**Leading questions** are directive and indicate the preferred answer. These are unlikely to be useful in an interview.

Example I expect you like to work as part of a team?

## **Guidance on conducting interviews**

### **Interview preparation**

A structured interview, designed to discover all relevant information and assess the competencies of the applicant, is an efficient method of focusing on the match between job and candidate. A structured interview method, also means there is a consistent form to interviews. Every candidate must be offered the same opportunities to give the best presentation of themselves, to demonstrate their suitability and to ask questions.

All interviews need careful preparation if they are to be successful. Each candidate should leave with a sense of being treated fairly and having had the opportunity to perform their best.

Interviewers should be fully experienced. Interview panels should have one member who has undertaken interview training, which can be achieved through the Recruitment, selection and interviewing skills course offered by the Human Resources and Organisational Development team. Interview panels should normally consist of 2-3 members, who should be aware of the following:

- Equal opportunities legislation

- Codes of practice

- Terms and conditions of the post

- Recruitment and appointment process adopted by Surrey County Council

### **Inviting applicants to interview**

See stage 2 of the recruitment process of evaluating and shortlisting applications.

### **Interview planning**

Interview planning is essential to ensure appropriate questions are asked and relevant information is obtained to enable the interviewers to assess the candidate against the job profile/person

most cases, the Shared services centre (SSC) Recruitment team will be responsible for sending out letters inviting applicants for interview. It is important to remember the objectives of the Interview:

- To determine whether the candidate is suitable for the post (and to work with children or vulnerable adults, if applicable)

- To determine whether the job and the County Council are suitable for the candidate

To create within the candidate a feeling of fair treatment

The interview format should be planned in advance to ensure everything is covered and important information is not missed. It also allows the opportunity to anticipate questions that might come up in the interview. An appropriate amount of time for each interview should be allocated. The length of the interview will depend on the role, the seniority and the type of Interview, but should be a minimum of 30 minutes.

### **Arrangements for candidates with disabilities**

In the case of people with disabilities, special arrangements may be needed. Therefore, individuals stage. Arrangements that may be required include the following:

Allowing deaf or speech impaired people to bring an interpreter with them

Alerting employees to be prepared to show blind people to the place of interview

Ensuring that the place of interview is accessible to any candidate with a mobility disability or that assistance is available to them when they arrive

Occupational Health can be contacted for advice on additional adjustments. For further information, recruiting managers are referred to the Equal opportunities in employment policy.

### **Interview questions**

The interview questions should be set in advance to meet the objectives above and should be based on the job description and person specification. Questions must not be based on personal information

community care, the questions should explore t

information from them to decide if they are suitable for the post. The following points can be used when conducting interviews to put the candidate at ease and ensure the process is as effective as possible:

Introduce yourself and the other members of the panel

Give some background information about the organisation and the role

Structure the questions to cover all the relevant areas and try and ask open-ended questions to encourage the candidate to talk freely

Avoid leading questions

Listen and make brief notes so that the questions can be marked following the interview

Have a time frame and keep to it, allowing time for candidates to ask any questions

Discuss with the candidate the terms and conditions of the role

Confirm to the candidate what will happen next and ensure realistic time-scales are given and keep to them

Inform the candidate that all appointments are subject to satisfactory medical clearance, references and a criminal records check, if applicable to the post.

Thank the candidate for attending.

A record of the interviews, including reasons for rejection or selection must be made. The codes printed on the standard application form can be used, supplemented by notes and an Interview record form. Members of the panel should agree the prime reasons for selection or non-selection and the original copy of the application form should be marked accordingly, and signed and dated by a nominated member of the panel. All relevant papers relating to an application must be retained for a minimum of 6 months in order to demonstrate why a particular candidate was not successful in the event of any enquiry or complaint of discrimination.

A selection should not be made if the candidates seen were not up to the required standard. In this event it is better to see further candidates previously not included on the final short-

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Clearly some questions represent stereotyped attitudes about sex or race or carry a presumption that may be wholly unfounded. As a general rule ask similar questions of all candidates. Only vary the questions where there are good reasons based on factors other than race/sex/marital status. In the case of a woman, consider whether you would put the same question to a man; if the answer is "no" because you consider men and women as a whole are different in a particular respect, then the question is probably discriminatory.

In certain specific cases questions must be asked of all or some candidates which might appear to be discriminatory but are not, because they relate to exclusions catered for in the relevant legislation or to the County Council's need to safeguard itself from breaking the law. An example of the latter is the need to ask to see proof of eligibility to work in the UK.

\*For certain posts, an exception from the Rehabilitation of offenders act applies and hence a question can and must be asked about the existence of any offences, whether "spent" or not within the terms of the Act. Similarly, candidates should be reminded that in the event of their selection, offers of employment will be subject to confirmation of their eligibility through the Procedure on crimin

# Safer Recruitment policy (formerly CRB policy)

## Introduction

Surrey County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy document, for which Human Resources is responsible, provides the underpinning framework for safer recruitment and continued monitoring based on statutory requirements and good practice.

The provision of further guidance, procedures and protocols is devolved to the Deputy Head of HR & Organisational Development; for schools, Babcock 4S. All published policy and guidance must be adhered to by managers and others recruiting and managing staff with access to vulnerable adults and children.

Following the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman at Soham in 2002, the recruitment of staff who work with children and vulnerable adults was brought into sharp focus when their murderer, a college caretaker, was discovered to have been reported to police for alleged sexual abuse of young women at geographically diverse locations; however, as he had never been cautioned or convicted, the information was not disclosed in his CRB check to relevant prospective employers. The lack of a robust nationwide information system had contributed to his employers not being alerted to potential risks. There followed an enquiry by Sir Michael Bichard, who made a range of recommendations- many of which will come into effect in October 2009.

In the meantime, it is of paramount importance that all concerned remain vigilant and that managers make the best possible use of all sources of information available to them in an effort to ensure that the events of Soham, or similar, are never repeated.

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**obligations, maintain adequate(s )-and auditable records, and that SCC is not vulnerable to legal challenge either directly or vicariously.**

This document provides managers and staff with the instructions and information they require to ensure safer recruitment for safeguarding the vulnerable groups with whom they work. Further advice and guidance is provided by the Deputy Head of HR and Organisational Development.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the review process.

This guide provides the following information. Use the links below to select the individual pages within the policy you require or if you would like to view/print the whole document click [here](#).

**The Statutory Requirements:** It is a requirement that everyone working with children and/or vulnerable adults must have CRB disclosure at the enhanced level. CRB disclosure should include a

Disclosure must be obtained prior to the individual commencing employment and must be re-checked at three yearly intervals or more frequently if there is cause for concern.

Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to action under the SCC Disciplinary Policy.

**Responsibilities:** SCC has responsibility for ensuring that recruitment, selection, and retention decisions for posts working with children and vulnerable adults who use SCC services are safe, and that the authority meets its social and statutory obligations.

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## **The role of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)**

The CRB is an executive agency of the Home Office set up under the Police Act 1997 to carry out criminal record checks on prospective employees and volunteers. It acts on behalf of registered bodies recruiting to posts, exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) or where other statutory regulations permit or require such vetting. SCC is such an employer.

**Work Placement Students.** CRB disclosures must be carried out on work placement students who will have frequent and/or intensive access to children and/or vulnerable adults.

**Who should obtain CRB disclosure ?**

Recruiting managers are responsible for obtaining CRB disclosure.

or any

position or role defined

Services and recruiting managers must not accept a previous disclosure obtained for that person by another organisation, irrespective of how recent it is. SCC does not regard CRB disclosures as po





**When the offence occurred**



