

Recruitment and selection Policy and Procedure



Document Control

Version: 1 – April 2023
Approved By: Director HR and Organisational Development
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Effective From: June 2023
Review Date: April 2024

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1 Policy

1.1 Aim

1.1.1 Lambeth council is committed to Safer Recruitment. Our aims for Safer Recruitment and selection are:

- To recruit the right people into the right jobs at the right time, in a fair, consistent, and cost- effective manner.
- To promote and practice safe recruitment and selection, in line with the council's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) policy and the council's ongoing commitment to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- To achieve, through recruitment and succession planning, a workforce that reflects, at all levels and in all jobs, the diversity of the community and customers we serve.
- To ensure all recruitment and selection processes and decisions conform to legislative requirements and are undertaken in accordance with other related council policies.
- To ensure that all partnership agencies and organisations adhere to Lambeth's comprehensive safer recruitment procedures.

1.2 Scope

1.1.2 This policy and procedure applies to all recruitment campaigns run by and on behalf of the council. The appointment of agency workers and consultants is covered by arrangements with the council's Managed Service Provider.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.1.3 **Line Managers** are responsible for ensuring that:

- they have the necessary funding for the post to which they wish to recruit.
- recruitment panel members understand the requirements of the post and panel members have attended recognised Recruitment & Selection training.
- recruitment panels reflect the diversity of the council workforce and, in particular, include at least one Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic' panel member/EDI representative
- the vacant post has an up-to-date job description and person specification.
- disabled persons who meet the essential shortlisting criteria are shortlisted in line with the accreditation standards for Disability Confident"
- they do not involve themselves in the appointment of personal friends or relatives. (This would also apply to professional associates, where a conflict could arise).
- they comply with this procedure and follow HR advice

1.1.4 **The Human Resources Division (HR)** is responsible for:

- providing appropriate support and guidance throughout the recruitment process.
- ensuring that Executive appointments at Director level are made by the appropriate council committee.
- monitoring the application and effectiveness of the procedure, reporting trends and non-compliance.

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- ensuring compliance with this procedure by managers
- advising on appropriate selection methodologies (advertising media, selection tests etc.)

1.2 Confidentiality

- 1.2.1 All information obtained from applicants in the recruitment and selection process will be treated confidentially and will be confined to those involved in the process. Monitoring information is used to ensure the council attract a broad range of people from all sections of the local community and will not be shared with the selection panel.

1.3 Training / Accreditation

- 1.3.1 To ensure the consistent application of this Policy and Procedure the council's requires that, as far as possible, all staff involved in the process of recruitment and selection complete the nominated recruitment & selection training course and familiarise themselves with the council's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) policy and safer recruitment guidelines, prior to undertaking any recruitment and selection.
- 1.3.2 Alternatively, individuals can be assessed and accredited for prior learning in recruitment, selection and equalities by their line manager.
- 1.3.3 Where selection panels comprise of representatives from partner organisations, the recruiting manager should ensure that they adhere to the standards in this document and that they are trained or accredited for prior learning appropriately.

1.4 Occupational tests & psychometric profiling

- 1.4.1 Occupational tests and psychometric profiling will only be used when relevant to the vacant post and where they add value to the recruitment and selection process. Staff at PO6 and above will normally participate in an assessment centre for selection purposes.
- 1.4.2
- 1.4.3 Where psychometric questionnaires, licensed occupational tests, and externally purchased tests are to be used, they will be commissioned and administered through the HR service.
- 1.4.4 Other occupational tests whether basic (e.g., spelling or typing) or more detailed (e.g., special aptitude tests, presentations) will be conducted through the recruiting manager who will be responsible for the test, ensuring that it avoids unfair discrimination, that it is validated accordingly by HR, and that it is reliable, acceptable, and fit for purpose. There will be clear scoring criteria from the outset.
- 1.4.5 Where it is intended to use any of these arrangements, applicants must be notified in writing beforehand. Tests and profiles will be reasonably adjusted to accommodate any requirements of disabled applicants.
- 1.4.6 All results shall be evaluated and interpreted by suitably trained / accredited staff; shall be regarded as confidential and restricted to those involved in the selection process; and shall be judged only in relation to the criteria previously specified.

1.5 Posts with access to children and other vulnerable people

- 1.5.1 The council recognises that some people are vulnerable and at risk through potential misuse of power by service providers. It is determined to ensure that all its customers, and in particular children and vulnerable adults, enjoy a safe and positive experience of its service. In this context the recommendations of both the Warner report and the Bichard Inquiry have been incorporated into the staff selection procedure. These provisions must be applied rigorously so candidates are left in no doubt about the council's determination to appoint staff who pose no threat to children and vulnerable adults. The council is committed to listening to children and vulnerable adults and therefore includes rigorous processes for recruitment to posts providing services to such users.
- 1.5.2 For posts with access to children and other vulnerable people, the recruitment pack should include a statement which conveys how rigorous staff recruitment and selection contributes to the council's overall commitment to protect children/vulnerable adults from abuse through to the delivery of safer environments and services for children/ vulnerable adults and their families/carers.
- 1.5.3 Also, a statement should tell successful applicants for these posts that,
- Current and former employers will be asked about allegations, disciplinary investigations, and their outcomes, etc.
 - DBS disclosure will be sought and at what level
 - Evidence of identity and proof of address will be required.
 - The Panel will thoroughly explore any gaps or inconsistencies in the employment record and question repeated changes in employment
 - No candidate will be able to commence employment with the council until the results of all checks are known and satisfactory references are received
 - Candidates will need to demonstrate their suitability for access to children and/or vulnerable adults.
- 1.5.4 See Appendices A & B for more detailed information in relation to the council's ongoing commitment to Safer Recruitment.

1.6 Disabled candidates

- 1.6.1 Lambeth council operates within the nationally recognised Guaranteed Interview Scheme, (Disability Confident) for applicants and employees with a disability when applying for roles under this policy. Therefore, any job applicant either internally or externally, with a disability who meets the minimum essential criteria for a role, will be guaranteed an interview. As appropriate, reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process may be applied.
- 1.6.2 Employers have a statutory obligation not to discriminate against, victimise or harass applicants in the following ways:
- The arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job role
 - The terms and conditions of the contract
 - Refusing an employment offer to an applicant because of their protected characteristics.
- 1.6.3 The council will accommodate any reasonable adjustments for disabled people at every stage of the process.

1.6.4 The council may, from time to time, adopt recruitment initiatives to encourage specific targeted groups into the council from those under-represented groups.

1.6.5 Further information can be found in the council's Disabilities in Employment Managers' & Staff Guidance.

1.7 Politically restricted posts

1.7.1 Politically restricted posts are:

- posts which require giving advice to the authority on a regular basis or speaking on behalf of the authority on a regular basis.
- Posts in the political group office which will be subject to the Memorandum of Understanding between the council and the employee.

1.7.2 More details on politically restricted posts can be found in the council's **code of conduct**.

1.8 Work permits

1.8.1 Work permits are not required for those with British citizenship or UK residency. If a successful candidate filling a recognised skills shortage does require a work permit, Human Resources will make the required Work Permit and Leave to Remain applications with the Home Office and will demonstrate that the qualifications/skills fall under the UK's recognised skill shortages.

1.8.2 Employers are required to take measures to ensure that people recruited to employment are eligible to work in the U.K. The council currently requires a valid passport with eligibility to work in the UK for a specific period or a full birth certificate for citizens born in the UK as well as evidence of NI Number or proof that the candidate is actively making an application for one with the DWP. The DWP will only issue an NI Number for workers from overseas once a job offer has been made.

1.9 Rehabilitation of Offenders

1.9.1 Managers will be expected to identify which posts are exempt from the requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Where posts are exempt this must be clearly stated on the application form. See **Appendix A** for further details.

1.10 Appointment of staff who have previously been made redundant/taken early retirement

1.10.1 There is no restriction on the subsequent re-employment of former local authority staff who have retired or been made redundant, except as set out below. However, managers are advised to be able to justifiably show that they acted reasonably and that each such redundancy met the statutory definition of redundancy and all opportunities for alternative employment had been explored. Ex local authority employees should be aware of the financial implications if they are re-employed, particularly if they are in receipt of a local authority pension.

1.10.2 Employees who have recently left the council on the grounds of redundancy or early retirement should not be re-employed as consultants or agency workers within one year from their last day of service.

2 Procedure

2.1 Recruitment checklist

- 2.1.1 Consider alternative solutions. Where a post becomes vacant or new/ additional tasks arise, consideration should be given to alternative solutions to filling the vacancy, bearing in mind the importance of creating opportunities for all employees to have work experience across the organisation (such as shadowing, work placement, job trials, technical skills development. For example:
- Reallocating work on a temporary basis using honorarium or acting up arrangements
 - Advertise the position internally on a temporary basis as a Secondment opportunity allowing opportunity for career development and encouraging succession planning
- 2.1.2 If filling the vacancy or establishing a new job is necessary, a recruitment panel should be established (including a minimum of three members at least, one of whom should be fully familiar with guidelines around Safer Recruitment). Interview and testing methods which support the Job Description and Person Specification should also be established at this early stage. Recruitment panels must, as far as is practicable, reflect the diversity of the workforce and, in particular, include at least one Black Asian and Multi Ethnic' panel member.
- 2.1.3 Draft job description & person specification. Revise (or compile a new) the job description. All job descriptions should include:
- Job title, department, or work unit.
 - Line management and supervisory arrangements.
 - Main purpose of job and principal duties and responsibilities.
 - Necessity of DBS disclosure where appropriate Further details on how to draft a job description can be found on <http://intranet.lambeth.gov.uk/StaffServices/HumanResources/Recruitment/JobDescriptionTemplate.htm>
- 2.1.4 Draft/review the person specification and selection criteria, making it clear which are essential elements. The person specification should detail the minimum qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities essential to do the job adequately. Physical requirements should not exclude disabled persons using aids and adaptation. Where a job requires that the post holder has a specific professional registration or qualification this can be listed as essential. Experience should be expressed as type and breadth not time; Equalities and diversity dimension of job should be included in the specification.
- 2.1.5 Further details on drafting a person specification can be found on <http://intranet.lambeth.gov.uk/StaffServices/HumanResources/Recruitment/PersonSpecification.htm>
- 2.1.6 Establish the appropriate grade and rate of pay for the job through the council's recognised Job Evaluation process.
- 2.1.7 Consider options in the context of funding available including:
- Costs of pay and fringe benefits.
 - Appointment on temporary/fixed term basis.

- Flexibility of contract e.g., part time/other nonstandard work pattern.
- 2.1.8 Update establishment record using the council's Human Resources Information System (Oracle People).
- Post Number; title; grade; salary; full time/part time; end date if fixed term contract.
 - Any Genuine Occupational Qualifications.
 - Necessity of Basic, Standard or Enhanced DBS disclosure where appropriate
- 2.1.9 Timetable - Draw up a timetable for the recruitment process:
- Date of advert/closing date/shortlisting date.
 - Dates of tests/pre-meeting/interviews.
 - Reserve the dates into panel members diaries as early as possible
- 2.1.10 Create advertisement and information pack - Draw up advertisement to include:
- Job title, pay and fringe benefits
 - Location/hours if not standard
 - Summary of job/key requirements
 - Whether the post is subject to DBS disclosure and at what level
 - Statement promoting Lambeth's commitment to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
 - Special conditions of employment
 - Where to get further details
 - Closing date, normally two weeks from date of appearance
 - Equalities and diversity statement/suitability for job sharing
- 2.1.11 Where appropriate the council will place composite adverts to reinforce the council's employer brand and to ensure cost effective advertising.
- 2.1.12 Advertise the post after firstly having considered any employees in the council's Redeployment Pool with the Recruitment Team. Further details can be found on section 2.1.7 of this document and the Organisational Change and Redundancy policy.
- 2.1.13 Draft information pack, including:
- Covering letter and timetable for interview.
 - Job description and person specification.
 - Application form (where post is exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act provisions, ensure that candidates are aware that they must give details of all previous convictions)
 - Conditions of service, including whether post is politically restricted and subject to a declaration of interest.
 - Closing date for receipt of applications and timetable for interviews.
 - Whether or not if unsuccessful candidates will be contacted at the shortlisting stage.
- 2.1.14 Determine selection criteria - Determine method(s) of selection:
- Consider whether to include presentations/assessment centres/work sample tests/skills tests/psychometric tests/in tray exercises
 - Ensure tests do not contain unjustifiable bias in content or scoring mechanism and do not place disabled candidates at a disadvantage

- Ensure psychometric tests are administered by trained staff
 - Ensure interview methods support the Job Description and Person Specification whilst at the same time, question a person's motivation for working in a particular field (particularly if the position requires working with children or vulnerable adults).
 - Ensure the council's commitment to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable clients is made obvious from the outset
 - Ensure candidates are offered feedback and told their results if they ask
- 2.1.15 Shortlist and interview - All candidates should be assessed against the person specification. Reason for not shortlisting should be recorded and provided to candidates if requested. Incomplete/late application forms to be considered at the panel's discretion. This discretion must be exercised equitably between candidates, so that if one incomplete or late application is considered, any other applications that are similarly late or incomplete are also considered.
- 2.1.16 Special provisions when considering applications from employees facing redundancy in the Redeployment pool:
- Request a fuller application if the employee's details do not address the shortlisting criteria
 - Shortlist all redeployees who fully meet all essential criteria
 - Shortlist where knowledge/experience criteria are partially met, and shortcomings could be remedied in reasonable time by training etc.
 - The recruiting manager should seek clarification from line manager if there is doubt over whether the criteria are met or constitutes suitable alternative employment
- :
- 2.1.17 When inviting candidates for interview, managers should:
- give enough notice of date, time, place, directions, stating where and who to report to on arrival.
 - give information about the process e.g., presentation, tests and send practice versions of psychometric tests if applicable.
 - request details of needs of disabled candidates.
 - request confirmation that the candidate will attend (give contact name and phone number).
- 2.1.18 All candidates should be asked the same core questions which **must** only relate to the Person Specification. Supplementary questions to probe deeper into the subject area should relate to the core questions. It is advisable to probe as much as possible to ensure the fairest possible assessment of candidates.
- 2.1.19 To help ensure the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, applicants to posts having access to children or vulnerable adults should be asked a range of supplementary questions to probe their capacity to meet certain person specification criteria. This should include questions about:
- The candidate's motivation to work with the client group.
 - Clarifying any gaps in work history and educational background or anomalies that appear on the application form.
 - The candidate's attitude to the use of power and authority.
 - Their attitude to the use of punishment and/or reward systems.
 - The person's understanding of the job and why they wish to do it.

2.1.20 Decide who to appoint:

- each panel member to assess candidates against person specification requirements.
- establish choices in order of preference.
- if a disabled person is the best person for the post, consider the need for adaptations of the working environment.
- record any amended assessments following discussion.
- record reasons for not appointing any unsuccessful candidate.

2.1.21 Contact candidates:

- contact successful candidate(s) with provisional offer via a telephone call.
- inform unsuccessful candidates.
- offer feedback and reasons for rejection where requested.
- where no candidate is considered suitable, reconsider job requirements.

2.1.22 References

- Applicants must provide details of two employment referees, one of whom should be their current or most recent employer. **Friends, relatives, and anyone living at the same address as a candidate must not be used as referees.** Candidates must state the capacity in which the referee is known to them.
- School, College and University leavers may use teachers or tutors as referees.
- Internal candidates successful in their application for Secondments within the council will only be subject to one employment reference.
- References will only be taken up after the interview process has been completed and the applicant has accepted the job offer.
- Confirmation of the following should be sought **in writing and within one week:**
 - post held, dates employed, salary at time of leaving
 - principal responsibilities
 - skills, knowledge & abilities (focusing on the key person specification requirements)
 - candidate's performance, attendance, timekeeping, and conduct
 - disciplinary record, details of any criminal convictions and whether the post is exempt or non-exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
 - whether or not the applicant should be appointed to the post applied for
- Include a copy of the job description & person specification and state there is an "open files policy" but that confidentiality will be respected.
- Any concerns about the reference should be ideally queried in writing and written notes should be made of any telephone conversations as support for any subsequent claims of unfair discrimination.
See Appendix B for special provisions relating to those working with children and vulnerable adults

2.1.23 The council is required to consider all new employees' eligibility to work in the UK before they commence employment with the council. All new employees will be written to confirm provisional offer of appointment stating offer is subject to satisfactory medical, references, proof of qualifications, DBS checks and declaration of interests, and production of a Passport or Birth Certificate which confirms the person's eligibility to reside and work in the UK. Offer letter should also include the following:

- Names of the employer and employee

- Rate of pay and Pay Scales used for calculating pay.
- intervals at which payments will be made.
- hours of work.
- where the employment is not intended to be permanent, the date on which it is intended to end.
- any relevant collective agreements.
- disciplinary rules and grievance procedures.

***n.b.** All new starters shall automatically commence at the lowest spinal point of the grade. Where an employee's post is upgraded through promotion, temporary acting up or secondment, job evaluation or career grade acceleration, the postholder will move to the lowest spinal point of the new grade. In situations where grades overlap, postholders will benefit from at least one incremental point.*

2.2 Appointment administration:

- chase references if not received and write to current employer if not done previously.
- check references, medical, qualifications, DBS clearance, declaration of interests.
- confirm or withdraw offer of appointment.
- if confirmed, agree start date.
- initiate probationary and induction arrangements with HR

2.2.1 File recruitment record:

- keep details of decisions at shortlisting and appointment stages and reasons for rejection.
- record data for equal opportunities monitoring.
- keep interview notes sufficient to justify decision.
- keep recruitment file confidential and retain for six months, after which time it should be destroyed as confidential waste.

3 Other information

3.1 Induction

- 3.1.1 All newly appointed staff, whether they are an internal or external applicant, will receive a full and comprehensive induction by Human Resources and their manager into the post, the team, and the council (where appropriate). All new recruits will attend a Departmental Induction as well as the **council's Corporate Induction Training course** and any other mandatory courses.
- 3.1.2 New managers should also attend the council's mandatory Recruitment & Selection course which incorporates 'Safer Recruitment' practices.

3.2 Probation

- 3.2.1 All newly appointed staff will be subject to a six-month probationary period. See the **Probationary Policy and Procedure** for further information.

3.3 Recruitment and retention

- 3.3.1 Payment of Professional Subscription Fees. The council will honour annual subscription fees (up to the value of £300 per employee) for professional bodies

listed on List 3 of HM Revenue & Customs website (www.hmrc.gov.uk) where relevant to the post.

- 3.3.2 Business Unit Managers must agree with HR, positions within their service that are associated with professional bodies and evidence if membership is an essential criterion for the duties of employment. Business Unit Managers should note that their BU's must be able to accommodate the costs involved as part of compliance with Departmental Financial Regulations. Managers must subsequently provide HR with the approximate costs of membership and numbers of employees this will be applicable to within their Departmental remit.
- 3.3.3 Further advice and information can be provided by the council's Corporate Capital and Tax team.
- 3.3.4 An employee who fails to complete 12 months' service after annual fees have been reimbursed will incur a pro-rata deduction from their final salary payment. Subscription Fees will be processed by Payroll as expenses by using the council's recognised expense claim procedure and will be exempt from Tax and National Insurance liability.

3.4 Safer Recruitment working with vulnerable adults, young people or children

- 3.4.1 There are a number of legislative requirements and statutory guidelines for compliance to ensure the safe recruitment into council posts, particularly positions where staff work with or are closely involved in services for children and vulnerable adults. These include but are not limited to:

Keeping Children Safe in Education: for schools and colleges. DfE September 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

Working together to Safeguard Children - A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. DfE March 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

See Appendix B

4 Appendix A - Employment of people with convictions

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 As the council meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment in posts with access to children or vulnerable adults or as managers of such posts, will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands, or final warnings, as well as convictions. Further guidance can be found at www.dbs.gov.uk

4.2 Use of Criminal Record/Convictions Information

- 4.2.1 The disclosure of criminal record information will be used as one tool within the overall recruitment process.
- 4.2.2 Applicants must be informed at the outset if criminal record information will be requested from them. This will provide a basis for the applicant to decide whether to apply for the post. It should be emphasised that this information will be used only to assess the applicant's suitability for employment, in so far as it is relevant, and that they will be considered on merit and ability and not discriminated against unfairly.
- 4.2.3 Applicants must be told in writing that relevant criminal convictions and other associated information will be discussed at the interview to assess job related risks. They should be encouraged to submit appropriate written details and dates in confidence to a named person responsible for ensuring the security of this highly sensitive information using an envelope marked 'private and confidential'. They should be invited to attach any other information they wish to draw attention to that may improve understanding and fair decision- making.
- 4.2.4 When recruiting to posts that are exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, the level of disclosure of all criminal record information must be specified i.e., Basic, Standard Disclosure (including details and dates of 'spent' convictions, cautions, reprimands, and final warnings) or Enhanced Disclosure (other relevant non-conviction information including police enquiries and pending prosecutions). When recruiting to posts that are not exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, unspent criminal convictions should be considered only when they are relevant to the post.
- 4.2.5 At the selection process, issues concerning offences must be raised with applicants as part of a carefully structured and managed process that allows open and honest discussion.
- 4.2.6 Applicants must be given the opportunity to discuss Disclosure information before a final recruitment decision is made as part of a post-interview process in consultation with the council's Safer Recruitment Panel. If information provided in the Disclosure contradicts that provided by the applicant, this will be discussed with the applicant in person as part of a post- selection process. It may be that the Disclosure contains information the applicant was not asked about during the interview, or the applicant was unaware they had a criminal record.

- 4.2.7 If the candidate has been given inaccurate information and are under the impression their convictions have become spent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. It maybe they hid their convictions to increase their chances of employment. Or it may be that the information contained in the Disclosure is inaccurate or relates to someone else with the same name. In any event, applicants should be given the opportunity to explain the situation before a final decision is made.
- 4.2.8 Where Disclosure information is sought in relation to existing employees and it is then discovered they have failed to disclose an 'unspent' conviction, they will be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct although this should not lead to automatic dismissal. Only after a full appraisal of the situation by the council's Safer Recruitment Panel including the risks involved, should dismissal be considered. The relevance of the conviction to the post should be established. If an employee deliberately withheld conviction information to gain employment in a non-risk area, disciplinary action must be considered.

4.3 Assessing the relevance of criminal records

- 4.3.1 The suitability for employment of a person with a criminal record will vary, depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions. An assessment of an applicant's skills, experience and conviction circumstances should be weighed against the risk assessment criteria for the job.
- 4.3.2 An applicant's criminal record will be assessed in relation to the tasks he or she will be required to perform and the circumstances in which the work is to be carried out. The following will be considered when deciding on the relevance of offences to posts:
- does the post involve one-to-one contact with children or other vulnerable groups as employees, customers and clients or does it involve management of such posts?
 - what level of supervision will the post holder receive?
 - does the post involve any direct responsibility for finance or items of value?
 - does the post involve direct contact with the public?
 - will the nature of the job present any opportunities for the post holder to re-offend in the place of work?
- 4.3.3 The answers to such questions will help the council to determine the relevance of convictions to specific posts.
- 4.3.4 For short-listed applicants who are assessed as meeting the requirements of the person specification and who then disclose a criminal record that is not related directly to the post, the Chair of the Selection Panel should discuss the relevance of each offence with the applicant and if necessary, accelerate this to the council's Safer Recruitment Panel.
- 4.3.5 Whilst it will not always be possible to carry out a thorough risk assessment on everyone, the following issues should be considered as a minimum requirement:
- the seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of other employees, customers, clients, and property
 - the length of time since the offence occurred
 - any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed, for example the influence of

domestic problems, financial difficulties, drug/alcohol dependency or mental illness

- whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely
- the country in which the offence was committed; some activities are offences in Scotland and not in England and Wales, and vice versa
- whether the offence has since been decriminalised by Parliament
- the degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change.

4.4 Implementing safeguards

4.4.1 Information regarding offences must be kept confidential and on a need-to-know basis. Offence information should be kept securely in lockable filing cabinets. Access to keys must be restricted to individuals responsible for recruitment.

4.4.2 Disclosures must normally be destroyed within 1 year of the recruitment decision and not later than the period specified in the '**Code of Practice for Registered Persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information**'. The name of the individual, the date, type and reference number of the Disclosure and the position applied for can be kept as a record of the recruitment decision taken but must be kept as confidential, secure information.

4.5 Reviewing policies and procedures

4.5.1 Criminal record information must be used in a way that protects the vulnerable, is fair and improves the overall recruitment and retention process. In particular, the council will:

- review new posts to assess whether they involve any risk
- ensure staff involved in recruitment are provided with guidance on the employment of ex-offenders and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- provide information to staff involved in recruitment, on training and employment programmes for the unemployed, including those programmes that work specifically with ex-offenders
- provide relevant feedback related to their convictions to all unsuccessful applicants.

To provide some additional guidance, some types of offences as normally excluding consideration for appointment [described as Category 1 offences] and some others, [described as Category 2 offences] where the reasonable application of the above guidelines may facilitate a consideration of appointment over time.

4.6 Category One Convictions

4.6.1 A conviction for any of the following types of offences would normally prevent an applicant from being employed by the council in any post involving service user contact (the offences listed are examples):

- Convictions involving service users and other vulnerable persons e.g.:
 - offences involving any physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse of children

- offences involving any physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse of elderly people or other adults who are in dependent relationships to the offender.
- other offences of violence, aggression, abuse, or fraud.
- Convictions involving employers, their premises or service users' premises e.g.:
 - theft from an employer.
 - criminal damage to the property of employer or of service user; and/or drunk and disorderly offences where this has occurred at work.
- Other convictions e.g.:
 - the possession, selling or supplying of or dealing in drugs and/or burglary whether or not involving theft.
 - Serious motoring offences that call into question the integrity of the offender:
 - e.g., driving whilst disqualified, driving with no insurance.

4.7 Category Two Convictions

- 4.7.1 The following types of convictions, categorised generally as being of a less serious nature, would not necessarily prevent employment or a student placement and consideration could be given to time factors and extent of convictions. The convictions listed are examples:
- careless driving, driving under the influence of drink where limit only marginally exceeded
 - theft such as shoplifting.
- 4.7.2 Appointment could be considered when at least ten years have elapsed between the last conviction and the start date of the placement or appointment etc., for this type of 'Category 2' offences.
- 4.7.3 Appointment may be considered after at least seven years have elapsed since the last conviction under Category Two where the person was under 18 years of age when the last offence(s) was committed.
- 4.7.4 In any event Selection Panels should be aware that the decisions suggested above can only be taken when the person declares his/her convictions. If convictions were not declared on the person's Application Form and come to light, following appointment, an investigation will be undertaken.
- 4.7.5 Where it becomes clear that the person has obtained employment by deception (i.e., not declaring convictions), action will be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure or the matter may in some circumstances be reported to the police.

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- 4.7.6 The main categories of occupations in this council, which will require disclosure of all convictions, are:
- Those involving contact (or the management of) with children, the elderly and vulnerable clients.
 - Those involved in the administration of law.
 - Senior managers in financial services.
 - Chartered or Certified Accountants.

5 Appendix B - Safer recruitment to posts with access to children and vulnerable adults

N.B. These considerations apply to all such posts including those not historically in the Disclosure & Barring Service checking process.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

5.1 Substantial Access

5.1.1 The following criteria will determine whether a particular post has "substantial access" to children. They should also be applied where there is substantial access to vulnerable adults, including elderly people.:

- **Does the role involve one-to-one contact?**

Such contact is relevant, especially if it occurs on a regular basis, away from home, or separate from other adults and children. Be aware that inappropriate people often create opportunities to gain one-to-one contact. Decide how to manage such a risk.

- **Is the post unsupervised?**

Where no other responsible adult is likely to be present and the post involves appreciable periods of time with children or vulnerable people this should be considered. Remember that once in post, the person is legitimised and will carry a certain status. This could be manipulated to gain inappropriate access outside the workplace. Take steps to minimise this possibility.

- **Is the situation an isolated one?**

There is a greater vulnerability to a child who is living away from home e.g., in residential care, possibly for lengthy periods, and this may be enhanced the further the child is from the parental home, or where parental visits are infrequent. A similar situation could arise where there is opportunity to take children singly, or in a group, away from the family surroundings (for example, on holiday). This applies to other vulnerable groups as well.

- **Is there regular contact?**

The more regular contact a person has with the same child, or group of children, the greater the opportunity to put the child at risk. This is especially so if the contact is away from others. Intermittent contact, for example parent helpers for school trips, would not normally be regarded as having substantial access for the purpose of requesting checks - although there may be exceptional circumstances of parent helpers in schools whose access to children might be judged substantial in terms of these guidelines. The opportunity for abusers to 'groom' or 'silence' their potential victims or manipulate the environment must be diminished.

- **Are the children particularly vulnerable?**

It may be considered that younger children are more vulnerable than older children and generally less able to protect themselves, but the nature of the risk must also be considered. Younger children may be more at risk of sexual abuse, older children from drugs. More particularly, children with a learning or physical disability, or who have social or behavioural problems, are likely to be more vulnerable than those who are without disability and/or who have a stable home background. There is, however, no conclusive evidence to support any of these considerations. All children and vulnerable people must therefore be given the same protection. There is no comprehensive definition of 'working with children or vulnerable adults', so this is open to interpretation. It can broadly be defined, however, as 'anyone working in close contact with young people and/or vulnerable adults on a regular basis, as a requirement of the job.'

5.2 Criminal Record Checking and DBS arrangements

- 5.2.1 It is essential that people working or volunteering in settings who have close contact with or are in positions of trust with children or vulnerable adults are suitable for their positions. In conjunction with references, interviews and other selection processes and qualifications, DBS checks enable the employer to make an informed decision about recruitment to these positions.
- 5.2.2 The DBS process enables an employer to access information from the police, Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Department of Health (DoH). This will ensure that the employer is alerted to any known concerns regarding the applicant. The employer can then use this information to decide whether to offer a position to the applicant.
- 5.2.3 An enhanced DBS disclosure checks List 99 as well as the PoCA (Protection of Children Act List) and PoVA (Protection of Vulnerable Adults List). No one should begin their employment until DBS checks have been satisfactorily received. Further clarification on this should be sought from Human Resources or the DBS website www.dbs.gov.uk
- 5.2.4 Any applicant for a post which involves contact with children or vulnerable adults is required to be checked via the appropriate arrangements agreed by the council within the procedures set up by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It is vital that these arrangements are fully complied with, and that **appointees to such posts do not take up appointments until appropriate clearances have been received**. In addition, there are other arrangements in place via procedures operated in various Central Government Departments relating to applicants' suitability for appointments. These arrangements must also be complied with. If there is any doubt about these arrangements, advice must be sought from Human Resources.

5.3 Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosures

- 5.3.1 DBS Disclosures under 9 months
- 5.3.1.1 Any appointee who is due to commence employment with Lambeth and can produce their original DBS Disclosure issued within the last 9 months, may commence employment with the Authority whilst Lambeth HR carries out a new DBS Disclosure on the condition they sign a declaration stating they have not incurred (within the last 9 months) any Police charges or investigations, bindovers, warnings, cautions or reprimands.
- 5.3.1.2 In this case the applicant must produce the following:
- original disclosure certificate
 - new disclosure application form fully completed
 - relevant identification documents as per DBS guidance
 - consent to the request for disclosure from the DBS counter signatory
- 5.3.1.3 HR Recruitment will record details of the current disclosure on their new starter personal file and process the new disclosure application.
- 5.3.2 DBS Disclosures over 9 months or applicants with no current DBS Disclosure

- 5.3.2.1 In this situation appointees will not be allowed to commence employment with Lambeth until HR has received the outcome of the new DBS Disclosure.

5.4 Lambeth Agency Workers

- 5.4.1 Agency workers who have been appointed to a permanent position that they held as an agency worker must produce the following:
- original disclosure certificate (and if less than 9 months old)
 - new disclosure application form fully completed and sent off to the DBS
 - relevant identification documents as per DBS guidance
 - a declaration stating, they have not incurred (within the last 9 months) any Police charges or investigations, bindovers, warnings, cautions or reprimands.
- 5.4.2 If their most recent disclosure check is more than 9 months old, the agency worker cannot commence employment as a direct Lambeth employee until all the normal pre- employment checks have been undertaken.

5.5 Findings on DBS Disclosures

- 5.5.1 If during any of the above processes an appointee's DBS Disclosure gives details of convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, the following criteria must be fulfilled before commencement of employment:
- a further risk assessment must be completed and signed by the Head of Service and provided to the Divisional Director to review and sign after consultation with the council's Safer Recruitment Panel.
 - The Recruitment Consultant is provided with the signed risk assessment

5.6 References and other checks

- 5.6.1 It is essential that no one should take up duty until all the appropriate clearances have been received.

5.7 General

- 5.7.1 The Children Act requires employers to retain employment records of people who have worked with children for 15 years after they have left.
- 5.7.2 An employer must refer to the Department of Health and Social Care any individual who is or has been employed in a childcare position, if they have been suspended or dismissed on the grounds of misconduct which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm.

N.B. Rigorous vetting can only be part of the overall assessment of a person's suitability to be appointed. Research indicates that only 10% of adults who have abused children have a criminal conviction for such an offence.

6 Appendix C – DBS applications

6.1 Process

- 6.1.1 The hiring Recruitment Consultant along with the HR Team are responsible for informing applicants how to initiate the process of obtaining a Disclosure and ensuring that a suitable check is secured prior to them commencing / continuing employment.
- 6.1.2 The Recruitment Consultant will inform all new applicants that require DBS checks of the online process to follow.
- 6.1.3 The DBS applicant should bring (in person) to the Recruitment Team all the required identification (must be originals) as outlined in the DBS guidelines.
- 6.1.4 The Recruitment Team will verify identity, check accuracy, and countersign the Disclosure form and forward this to the DBS.
- 6.1.5 Applicants with a current DBS check (less than 9 months old) from a previous employer (or equivalent police check for non-UK passport holders) are required to bring their DBS/Police summary and proof of identification as outlined in the DBS guidance to the Recruitment Team for verification.
- 6.1.6 The DBS will send the Disclosure to the applicant.
- 6.1.7 Where a trace on the Disclosure has been highlighted, the Recruitment Team will note this on the applicant's application and liaise with the recruiting manager to view the Disclosure (the manager will also be required to sign that they have viewed the information contained within the disclosure).

6.2 DBS checks unsatisfactory

- 6.2.1 If a Disclosure reveals concerns which do not automatically disqualify the applicant, The Recruitment Consultant will advise the hiring Manager and the Departmental HR representative of the need to discuss the response with the DBS applicant further. The meeting should be arranged within 3 working days and reported back to the Head of Service. During the meeting the hiring Manager and HR rep should discuss any matters revealed with the applicant before a final decision is made. In the event of an applicant not revealing any records obtained during the recruitment process this should not be taken lightly as the recruitment pack information clearly states the necessity to declare any criminal records, cautions, bind overs etc. regardless of the nature of the offence. In such a case the offer will be withdrawn.
- 6.2.2 After considering all details revealed in the Disclosure, the Head of Service and Divisional Director will make the final decision. They will accept the record and sentence imposed as correct and fair and under no circumstances will they attempt to reach a different decision or make their own judgement. However, before a decision is made, they will consider the nature of the offence, past learning, contributions made to the community since the offence, how many offences have been recorded and the time since the offence(s) etc.
- 6.2.3 If a decision is made to progress with the Recruitment, a risk assessment will be made and signed off by the Divisional Director.

- 6.2.4 If a decision is made to withdraw the job offer, a full explanation will be provided to the applicant explaining the reason(s) for doing so based on the outcome of the DBS along with advice and judgement from Human Resources.
- 6.2.5 If the Disclosure reveals that the applicant is **disqualified** from working with children or vulnerable people, both the recruiting manager and the applicant should immediately be informed in writing.

7 Appendix D - References

7.1 Process

- 7.1.1 It is recommended that every applicant is asked to provide the name and address of at least two referees (including the applicant's current or most recent employer) who can comment on the applicant's experience, skills, knowledge, abilities, or character. If the current or most recent employer is not given as a referee, without good reason, it is recommended that a reference from the applicant's current or most recent employer is made a condition of appointment. Applicants must provide details of two employment referees, one of whom should be their current or most recent employer. **Friends, relatives, and anyone living at the same address as a candidate must not be used as referees.** Candidates must state the capacity in which the referee is known to them.
- 7.1.2 Current or most recent employer may not be an appropriate referee:
- when the current or most recent employment was self-employment.
 - when the most recent employer no longer exists, or their location is unknown to the applicant.
 - when the most recent employment was so long ago or of such short duration that it is unreasonable to take up a reference based on it.
 - when the most recent employment was so long ago that the previous employer would be unlikely to give a useful reference.
 - when the applicant has not been employed before.
- 7.1.3 Where the manager considers it inappropriate for a current or most recent employer to be given as a referee, it is recommended that applicants are required to provide an alternative referee who can comment on the applicant's experience, skills, knowledge, abilities, or character.
- 7.1.4 References should normally:
- be requested in writing, seeking comments on the applicant's suitability for the post applied for. (Open references, i.e., addressed "to whom it may concern", may be acceptable where specific references are not otherwise available, but their authenticity should ideally be supported with telephone or email confirmation from the author and / or organisation).
 - be taken up after final interviews have been held.
 - be a condition of any oral or written offers of employment.
 - include from the current or most recent employment referee:
 - (a) dates of employment, job title, salary, grade.
 - (b) description of the duties performed in the post(s) held.
 - (c) description of the skills, knowledge and experience gained in this employment.
 - (d) reason for termination of employment if it has terminated.
 - (e) any proven disciplinary offences, any outstanding disciplinary proceedings (*account should be taken of the seriousness of any offence, the time elapsed and its relevance to the current employment*).
 - (f) description of any criminal convictions that would exclude the applicant from employment under the person specification (*The reference request should indicate whether the post is exempted*

under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If not exempted, any 'spent' convictions should be disregarded). See Appendix A for more detailed guidance.

- 7.1.5 References should normally be disclosed to the applicant on request, unless explicitly provided 'in confidence' by the referee.
- 7.1.6 Oral references should normally be sought only of nominated referees and where referees have failed to respond to a written enquiry. Detailed notes should be made, dated, and signed by the person receiving an oral reference.
- 7.1.7 Employment starting before references are received should normally be made subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and should be terminated if these are not received. **Those working with children and vulnerable adults must not start employment before all necessary checks and references have been received.**
- 7.1.8 Clarify in writing with the referee any ambiguities in a reference or concerns arising out of the reference. Treat any such clarification as part of the reference and disclose to the applicant on request, unless explicitly provided 'in confidence' by the referee.
- 7.1.9 Discuss with the applicant any areas of concern arising out of a reference. Record in writing the discussions about these concerns and, if the concerns are unresolved, inform the applicant that any offer of employment is withdrawn.

Linked policies:

1. [Corporate Safeguarding policy](#)