

**The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland**



**Draft Revised Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection  
w.e.f. 01 April 2017**

# Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection

## Recommended by:

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland  
Commission House  
18-22 Gordon Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LG

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~~For advice and information regarding the content and interpretation of the Code, contact Commission officers by:~~

~~Telephone — 028 9031 3200~~

~~Email — [info@lgsc.org.uk](mailto:info@lgsc.org.uk)~~

~~Website — [www.lgsc.org.uk](http://www.lgsc.org.uk)~~

~~Typetalk — 18001 028 9031 3200~~

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## **The Purpose and Structure of the Code**

### **~~Status of the Code~~**

~~This Code is a statutory Code based on Section 40 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.~~

~~The Commission recommends this Code for adoption and implementation in the district councils in Northern Ireland in line with its statutory responsibilities to establish:~~

~~“..... a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to councils by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed”.~~

~~Extract from paragraph 40 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972~~

### **Purpose of the Code**

This Code has been designed primarily to guide the users through the process of selection, using seven stages. It should also be used as the basis for any training for selection panel members and all those involved at each stage in the recruitment process.

## ~~Departures from the Code~~

~~Any departure from the procedures as detailed in this Code must be agreed by the Commission. This may include, for example, changes to the composition of recruitment panels, or where government policy dictates that employers should target recruitment at particular disadvantaged groups such as the long term unemployed.~~

~~The Commission should be notified by the Council in writing, in advance of the intended departure, where this is practicable. Where it is not practicable to inform the Commission in advance, then the departure from the procedures should be documented, and the Commission informed as soon as possible.~~

## **Structure of the Code**

The Code is structured as follows:

**Parts A – C** provide the background information required to commence the process as follows:

### **Part A The Legislative Framework**

provides an outline of the main areas of legislation applicable to the recruitment and selection process.

## **Part B General Principles**

underpins good employment practice as recommended throughout the Code.

## **Part C Terms of Reference**

details to whom the procedures contained in this Code will apply, who has responsibility to ensure they are applied, etc.

**Part D** details how to implement the recruitment and selection process:

## **Part D Recruitment and Selection in Practice**

details the seven stages and provides relevant examples and guidance notes.

Each practical stage represents a stage in the recruitment and selection process as follows:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Stage 1 | Drafting the Recruitment Documentation             |
| Stage 2 | Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting |
| Stage 3 | Starting the Recruitment Process                   |
| Stage 4 | Shortlisting                                       |
| Stage 5 | Assessment Arrangements                            |
| Stage 6 | Interview  |
| Stage 7 | Post Interview                                     |

## Practical Application

To illustrate the practical application of the Code:

- the recruitment and selection process is presented as a seven stage flow chart at the beginning of **Part D** of the Code.
- annexes are inserted, where relevant, at the end of the Part of the Code or detailed Stage in the appointment process.
- all annexes are referenced in the contents section

## **Part A**

### **The Legislative Framework**

#### **Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

## Part A

### The Legislative Framework

Part A of the Code sets out the legislative framework underpinning the Code. The legislative framework should be considered in detail before commencing any recruitment exercise.

### Key Domestic Legislation

Appointment of the best person in terms of the criteria and competence framework established for a particular job is the fundamental principle underlying the current legislation impacting on all aspects of equality of opportunity (see paragraph on **Merit Principle** in Part B). The key domestic legislation is as follows:

- **The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and amendments** and the Code of Practice issued thereunder

Provides for protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, pregnancy and maternity leave, gender reassignment, being married or being a civil partner.

- **The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998** as amended and the Code of Practice issued thereunder

Provides for protection against discrimination and harassment on grounds of the perceived religious belief or political opinion of the individual.

- **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)** and the Code of Practice issued thereunder

Provides for protection against discrimination and harassment against disabled people.

- **The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997** as amended and the Code of Practice issued thereunder

Provides for protection against discrimination and harassment on grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, belonging to the Irish Traveller community.

- **The Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (as amended)**

Prohibits sex discrimination between men and women in respect of their contractual pay, and terms and conditions of employment.

- **The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland ) 2003**

Provides protection from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation.

- **The Employment Equality Age Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006**

Provides protection from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of age.

- **The Northern Ireland Act 1998**

Places a duty on public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:-

- between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without and
- between persons with dependants and persons without

The Act also places a duty on public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial groups.



- **The Human Rights Act 1998**

Enables individuals to invoke rights, enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights, in respect of public authorities, in domestic courts and tribunals.

- **The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978**

Provides for a criminal conviction to be regarded as spent, in certain circumstances.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979 sets out exemptions from the 1978 Order in relation to certain employment in leisure or recreational activities.

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 contains further exclusions from the 1978 Order in respect of regulated positions.

- **The Data Protection Act 1998**

Requires organisations which handle personal information to comply with important principles regarding privacy and disclosure.

- **The Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Makes provision for the disclosure of information held by public authorities unless precluded by exceptions.

Many of these provisions are complemented by, or the subject of additional obligations which also exist in, European law.

**Annex 1** contains a list of statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance relating to the above employment legislation.

**Annex 2** contains a copy of the Equality Commission publication “A Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities in Employment” which aims to amalgamate in one document the principles which are currently contained in the several equality codes of practice and other guidance materials that the Equality Commission has published. The provisions of the Guide substantially derive from the provisions of the existing statutory codes of practice and represent the Equality Commission’s current recommendations on best practice.

The employment legislation uses terms such as **direct discrimination**, **indirect discrimination**, **victimisation** and **harassment** to describe the different types of discriminatory conduct which are prohibited. Further information on the definitions and meanings of these terms may be found on the Equality Commission for NI website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org).

## **Affirmative and Positive Action**

Affirmative action and positive action measures may be necessary where the number of applicants or successful applicants for employment or promotion, from a particular group, are fewer than might be expected. Action may also be required where, for example, numbers from a particular gender, religion or racial groups are concentrated in particular departments, occupations or grades.

Councils are encouraged to take affirmative action or positive action measures where analysis of monitoring or other information highlights such problems in the workforce.

Where affirmative action and/or positive action measures are necessary to secure fair participation, a programme should be implemented in accordance with the advice contained in the relevant statutory Codes of Practice provided by the Equality Commission for NI.

## **Statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance**

This annex lists the statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance relating to employment legislation.

### **The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

The following statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance are issued by the Equality Commission for NI:

- Fair Employment in Northern Ireland: Code of Practice
- Removing Sex Bias from Recruitment and Selection – A Code of Practice
- Code of Practice on Equal Pay
- Protecting the Dignity of Women and Men at Work – A Code of Practice on Measures to Combat Sexual Harassment
- Code of Practice for Employers for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity in Employment
- Disability Code of Practice – Employment and Occupation

- Code of Practice for all employers on the avoidance of race discrimination in recruitment while seeking to prevent illegal working (published by the Home Office)

Other good practice guidance publications are:

- Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Northern Ireland – The Law and Good Practice
- Age Discrimination in Northern Ireland – The Law and Good Practice for Employers
- Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace
- Equal Pay Review Kit
- Recruitment Advertising – A Good Practice Guide
- A Step by Step Guide to Monitoring – Monitoring your workforce and applicants in line with fair employment regulations
- Employment Equality Monitoring – A Guide

- Recruitment from those not in employment: A good practice guide for promoting equality of opportunity
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Guide to the Statutory Duties
- Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Disabled People and Encouraging the Participation of Disabled People in Public Life: A Guide for Public Authorities
- Employing Migrant Workers: A Good Practice Guide for Employers

This list is for information only and all those involved in the recruitment and selection process should be familiar with all provisions of the relevant Codes of Practice.

Copies of these documents, and their updates, can be downloaded from the Equality Commission for NI website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org).

### **Information Commissioner's Office**

The Information Commissioner's Office is the independent authority set up to promote access to official information and to protect personal information.

- The Employment Practices Code

- The Employment Practices Code: Supplementary Guidance

Copies of these documents, and their updates, can be downloaded from the Information Commissioner's website at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

### **Northern Ireland Ombudsman**

The Northern Ireland Ombudsman deals with complaints from people who believe that they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration by government departments and public bodies in Northern Ireland.

Summaries of the cases investigated by the Ombudsman are available in the annual report which can be downloaded from the website at [www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk).

**The Equality Commission publication “A Unified Guide to Promoting  
Equal Opportunities in Employment”**



## **Part B**

### **General Principles Underpinning the Code**

### **Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

## **Part B**

### **General Principles Underpinning the Code**

Part B of the Code sets out the general principles underpinning the Code.

The general principles should be considered in detail before commencing any recruitment exercise.

### **Context**

- **Councils as Employers**

In order to implement this Code, councils should:

- strive to ensure that all potential applicants who are suitably qualified and experienced are made aware of vacancies and encouraged to put themselves forward for consideration
- include in all advertisements an equal opportunities statement to the effect that the council is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all those seeking employment
- avoid procedures, policies and practices which could unlawfully directly or indirectly discriminate

- **Equality of Opportunity**

The model equality of opportunity policy (included as **Annex 3**) proclaims and emphasises the public commitment of councils to strive to promote equality of opportunity. Everyone involved in the recruitment and selection process should be fully aware of their Council's Equality of Opportunity Policy, the provisions of this Code and the statutory employment Codes.

- **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a duty on public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Act also places a duty on public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial groups.

This Code ensures that equality of opportunity is fully integrated into the recruitment and selection process.

- **Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. This Code encourages councils to take positive action for disabled people in the recruitment and selection process.

- ~~**Local Government Reform/Modernising Agenda**~~

~~*The application of recruitment and selection procedures as detailed in this Code will assist councils to deliver quality services to all sections of the community in line with the councils' commitment to Local Government Reform and the Modernising Agenda.*~~

## **Merit Principle**

The aim of the recruitment and selection process is to appoint the best person in terms of the criteria and competence framework established for a particular job and, as far as possible, to ensure that there is objective evidence for the selection decision made. The merit principle has been incorporated in these procedures to assist councils in achieving this aim.

In making appointments under the merit principle, councils should ensure that all those seeking employment are aware of, and encouraged to apply for, job opportunities. ~~Subject to specific advice from the Commission~~, Councils are recommended to:

- identify essential job-related criteria which are not directly or indirectly discriminatory
- apply such criteria fairly and consistently at all stages of selection
- review and develop criteria to ensure fairness and equality throughout the recruitment process
- determine in a logical and reasonable manner any desirable criteria in excess of the advertised minimum standards of education, experience or professional attainment and training requirements. Information on these additional criteria must be made available to applicants, upon receipt of written request if they feel aggrieved at being excluded from the list of applicants selected to attend for assessment or interview.
- ensure all applicants are treated fairly and equally
- agree and record the importance of the various factors considered relevant to the identified selection criteria

- ensure that the shortlisting and interview panels are trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including the content of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance documents.
- ensure that the proceedings of selection panels are held in confidence, subject only to the need to disclose papers to assist in the resolution of any complaint
- record the assessments and decisions of members of shortlisting and interview panels and all those in attendance at panel meetings, and retain these records for a period of not less than 1 year
- record any departures from the recommendations in this Code.

### **Recruitment Methods**

~~In normal circumstances, all posts should be publicly advertised. However there may be times when councils may need to use alternative recruitment methods, for example:~~

- ~~• secondments or acting up to cover for maternity leave, development opportunities or temporary project work~~

- ~~in redundancy situations or restricted pools, for example trawls, where the council is under an obligation to seek to provide suitable alternative employment for current potentially redundant employees.~~

~~In the above circumstances, the selection procedures used in determining whom to appoint must be demonstrably fair and based on the requirements of the post. Councils may wish to trawl posts either internally within their own council or across all the councils and the Staff Commission.~~

### **~~Eligibility to Apply to Trawls~~**

~~Employees of all councils and the Commission will be eligible to apply to local government trawls.~~

## **Recruiting and Managing Talent Across Local Government**

A new approach to recruiting and developing staff has been developed in order to provide councils with the opportunity to retain the skilled, motivated and diverse workforce required to deliver excellent and efficient, citizen-centred services.

The new approach detailed in Annex 4 supports the development of effective organisations where skilled and productive people want to work by:

- the development of a centralised mechanism for trawling vacancies within the local government sector on a phased basis
- the introduction of a grade/promotion banding system
- the provision of a supporting programme of learning and development

This approach to recruitment supports the People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework by assisting councils to anticipate and tackle future workforce challenges, and ensure that the expertise of existing staff is fully utilised.

### **Re-organisation and Change**

Councils should ~~negotiate~~ ~~consult~~ with ~~the Commission and~~ the recognised trade unions on the process to be followed with respect to the staffing implications of reorganisation and change determining the appointment of existing/new staff to any revised structure.



## **Training of Panel Members**

All panel members should be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the content of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance documents.

The objective of the training should be that all those involved in the recruitment process should be able to apply selection procedures which are objective, structured, standardised and job-related and which take account of the principle of equality of opportunity for all.

Training programmes should be updated at regular intervals and refresher training for individuals should be undertaken at least every 3 years.

In addition, the person chairing the panel should receive guidance from the human resources section on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.

## Model Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1 Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Elected Members, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to the promotion of equality of opportunity in ..... Council.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Trade union membership or non membership

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

## **2 To whom does the policy apply?**

The Equal Opportunities policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) the Council, including:

- Job applicants and potential applicants
- Employees
- Contract workers
- Agency workers
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements
- Volunteer workers
- Former employees

## **3 Equality commitments**

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by the Elected Members, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team and has been agreed with the recognized trade

unions.

## **4 Implementation**

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager and supervisor also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and relevant others (such as contract or agency workers)
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non- discriminatory selection techniques
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (eg, staff newsletters, intranet)
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

## **5 Monitoring and review**

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, if appropriate and action taken as necessary. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

## **6 Complaints**

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures. A copy of these procedures is available from the Human Resources Manager. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal under the following anti-discrimination legislation:

- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, as amended
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, as amended
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, as amended
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, as amended.

However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Date: .....

Signature: ..... Chief Executive

Signature: ..... (trade union representative)

## Guidance and Action Plan on a New System for Recruiting and Developing Local Government Staff

The objective for a new approach to recruiting and developing staff is to provide councils with the opportunity to retain the skilled, motivated and diverse workforce required to deliver excellent and efficient, citizen centred services.

This new approach supports the development of effective organisations through:

- The development of a centralised mechanism for 'trawling' vacancies within the local government sector
- The introduction of a grade/promotion banding system
- The provision of a supporting programme of career development and training

Councils are advised to keep all of the measures introduced under review and where required, alter the measures to deal with relevant developments.

1. Councils should recognise that restricting job opportunities internally could have an indirectly discriminatory adverse impact and that such an approach might contravene recommendations within equality codes. Therefore the reasons for such measures must be clearly articulated and scrutinised on a regular basis as information and data becomes available which will influence the continuation or otherwise of this proposed restriction.

Councils should consider 'trawling' as a first step to filling posts. However, depending on the nature of the post and the skills required, councils may determine that some posts go straight to public advert.

2. Councils should set up or use existing consultative arrangements within individual councils for the consideration of restricting recruitment.
3. Councils should put in place a communication strategy to advise staff of developments on the implementation of a new approach to recruiting and developing local government staff.
4. Whilst overall responsibility for the new approach lies with the Chief Executive, the day to day implementation and monitoring will be undertaken by the Designated Human Resources Manager.
5. The process to be followed when considering filling a vacancy or promotional post should include:
  - A review of the job within current departmental structures
  - A review of the job description and person specification
  - An analysis of potential applicant pools with reference to current compositional and applicant analysis
  - The determination of fair participation in the most recent Article 55 Review, and any existing affirmative action measures agreed with the Equality Commission NI
6. Councils should consider and consult upon the new approach using the analysis of comparison pools to fill vacant posts by restricting the selection pools, taking into consideration equality monitoring data.

The following are the potential pools for internal trawling, which should be considered:

- the council department
- internal trawl (to Council staff)
- external trawl (to staff in all 11 councils)



- public advertisement
7. Councils should use public advertising at levels where comparisons indicate it is necessary, for example, public advertisement at basic recruitment level (for scales 1-2) or where the experience does not currently exist within the local government service.
  8. Councils should consider the implications of introducing a grade/promotion banding system:
    - With the introduction of a grade banding system, councils should consider the implications of the local government competency framework
    - Staff would no longer be recruited or promoted to specific posts, but to a grade band comprising one or more of the current traditional grades.
    - Such a system would allow for career development, flexibility and the movement of staff within and across organisations in the context of a development plan which includes a structured, objective, appraisal based promotion mechanism within the banded grading structure.
    - This system may be developed for implementation in the longer term based on a structured, objective, and performance management system.

9. Councils should provide a programme of career development and training:
  - Create a sector wide approach to the assessment of need for specific or new skills which facilitates a mechanism for sharing posts/skills.
  - This programme should be designed to match the organisational development plan in line with the council's strategic and business plans, and individuals' development needs.
10. Councils should record decisions at every stage (see attached Action Plan template) and keep under constant review.

## Talent Management: Action Plan for Recruitment and Selection

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 ..... Council is committed to employment equality for all. A copy of our equal opportunities statement is available .....
- 1.2 The purpose of this action plan is to address the recruitment and selection, and development needs for all staff employed by the Council.
- 1.3 This action plan is flexible to allow for changes in circumstances and will be kept under regular review.
- 1.4 The overall responsibility for the plan lies with the Chief Executive. However the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the operation of the Plan will be carried out by the Designated Human Resources Manager.
- 1.5 This Action Plan will draw on the following documentation and information:
- Article 55 reports
  - monitoring returns
  - internal equality and diversity reports
  - voluntary agreements with the Equality Commission for NI
- 1.6 It is the Council's view that this Action Plan will assist in:
- enhancing career opportunities for staff
  - addressing positive/affirmative action issues
  - providing a managed and focused approach to changing the method of recruiting, selecting and promoting staff within the Council

## **2. Consultation**

This Action Plan has been prepared with the assistance of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and recognised trade unions and management through the local consultative committees.

## **3. Statement of Agreement**

A joint statement of commitment on behalf of management and trade unions may be included here.

## **4. Composition of the Council Workforce at <date>**

Councils should include a summary analysis of their workforce composition, by grade/post, as well as an analysis of the internal applicant pool in order to establish if there is any adverse impact.

## **5. Analysis of Applicant Flows**

Councils should include a summary analysis of the composition of applicants and appointees.

## **6. Information on any ongoing affirmative/positive action measures (if any)**

Councils should include a summary analysis of any affirmative/positive action measures, the success criteria used and any indication of success/change over the last 2 years.

## **7. Conclusions**

Councils should identify any areas for action based on the analysis in paragraphs 4 - 6 above.

## **Action Timetable for a Specified Period**

The actions in this plan should be timetabled and should have the name of the senior officer who is responsible for each action clearly specified.

The Chief Executive will have overall responsibility for the Plan and the Designated Human Resources Manager will have responsibility for monitoring and advice on the operation of the Plan.

## **System for Filling Vacancies and Promotions**

### Process

Councils should include details of the process to be followed when a vacancy needs to be filled including:

- a review of the job requirements within current departmental structures
- a review of the job description and person specification, including the competencies required for the post, and banded grade
- an analysis of potential applicant pools including an analysis of current council composition and applicant pools
- any existing affirmative/positive action measures agreed with the Equality Commission NI

### Advertising

Councils should outline their policy on trawling/advertising posts at each of the grade/post levels which could include:

- the council department
- internal trawl (to Council staff)
- external trawl (to staff in all 11 councils)
- public advertisement

## Review

Councils should state that this action plan is flexible to allow for changes in circumstances and will be kept under regular review.

## **Part C**

### **Terms of Reference**

### **Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

## Part C

### Terms of Reference

Part C of the Code sets out the terms of reference underpinning the Code. The terms of reference should be considered in detail before commencing any recruitment exercise

### The Status of the Code

This Code is issued by the Local Government Staff Commission under Section 40(4)(b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 which requires the Commission to issue:

*“ .... a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to councils by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed”.*

~~In this respect, the Commission issues this Code as a statutory recommendation for adoption by all councils.~~

**This Code was adopted by the Commission on XXXX 2016 for subsequent adoption by all 11 councils.**



## The Scope of the Code

~~In issuing this Code, the Commission has been careful not to negate the responsibility~~  
Councils as employers, **should regularly** review their own detailed human resource practices, particularly in the light of analysis of monitoring returns. The procedures in this Code are designed to provide the minimum requirements for best practice ~~and but~~ may be supplemented ~~in consultation with the Commission~~ by individual councils, as **required**.

This Code applies to all appointments made by councils, irrespective of the terms of the appointment and regardless, for example, of whether the post is full time, part time, temporary, fixed term or permanent and including secondments.

~~In order to facilitate councils in the appointment of their staff, the administration of the recruitment and selection process may, at the request of the council, be undertaken by the Commission for example, in the appointment of the Chief Executive.~~

## **Departures from the Code**

~~Any departure from the procedures as detailed in this Code must be agreed by the Commission. This may include, for example, changes to the composition of recruitment panels, or where government policy dictates that employers should target recruitment at particular disadvantaged groups such as the long term unemployed.~~

~~The Commission should be notified by the Council in writing, in advance of the intended departure, where this is practicable. Where it is not practicable to inform the Commission in advance, then the departure from the procedures should be documented, and the Commission informed as soon as possible.~~

## **Ensuring Compliance with the Code**

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the requirements of this Code rests with the Chief Executive of the council.

## **Delegating Appointment Authority**

Good human resource practice dictates that decision making in relation to appointments should be made only by those involved in the appointment process. A candidate should be selected for appointment on the basis of demonstrating that they meet the required competencies of the post, as stipulated in the person specification, at assessment centre and interview. If a council seeks to overturn the decision of an interviewing panel, this could result in a case of maladministration or prima facie discrimination. It is therefore important that appropriate authority is given to the appointment panel to enable them to proceed with the appointment.

Legislation permits the delegation of appointment authority to a committee or an officer, either a panel member or a senior officer with responsibility for recruitment and selection matters. Councils must ensure that, in delegating appointment authority to a committee or an officer to enable interviewing panels to proceed in making appointments, they comply with the requirements of paragraph 47A (1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, as further detailed in Part VII paragraph 26(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985.

## **Other Codes of Practice**

It must be noted that this Code is not a stand-alone document and must be implemented in accordance with the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance documents (referred to in **Annex 1**).

## **Monitoring and Review of Procedures**

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 and the accompanying Fair Employment Code of Practice also place a duty on employers “ **to review, at least once every three years, both employment composition and practice ie, those practices affecting recruitment and training for employment in the concern, or training and promotion of employees in the concern**”.

Good human resources practice similarly places an obligation on employers to conduct reviews on all aspects of equality on a continuing basis.

## **Retention of Records**

It is important to keep comprehensive records of recruitment and selection exercises in order to be able to conduct equal opportunities monitoring and reviews but also to be able to respond to a complaint from an individual about a recruitment decision.

As detailed in the paragraph above, the Fair Employment legislation requires employers to conduct reviews of their workforce compositions and practices at least once every three years. Councils should therefore keep a certain amount of information relating to the composition of their workforce for at least three years to enable them to conduct meaningful reviews.

For these purposes it may not be necessary to retain voluminous records of recruitment and selection processes. Much of the relevant information can be retained in summary formats such as registers or grids or in computerised spreadsheets or databases.

In order to be able to respond to a complaint from an individual about a recruitment decision, it is good practice to keep all the original documentation about specific employment decisions for a period of at least one year. The documentation retained should be a complete file from the drafting of the job description, person specification and advertisement through to the offer and acceptance of the job. It should include all handwritten notes and marking sheets of the members of the selection panel, as well as the formal documents.

Where a complaint is made about a recruitment exercise, then the documentation should be retained until the conclusion of the matter.



## **Part D**

### **Recruitment and Selection in Practice**

#### **Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

**Before commencing the 7-stage recruitment and selection process, you will need to know the contents of Parts A, B and C included in this Code.**

**Each of the 7 stages can be studied on its own and used as a separate reference guide or Part D can be studied as a total process.**

- Stage 1      Drafting the Recruitment Documentation**
  
- Stage 2      Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting**
  
- Stage 3      Starting the Recruitment Process**
  
- Stage 4      Shortlisting**
  
- Stage 5      Assessment Arrangements**
  
- Stage 6      The Interview**
  
- Stage 7      Post Interview**



**Stage 1:**

**Drafting the Recruitment Documentation**

## **Stage 1 – Drafting the Recruitment Documentation**

The first stage in the recruitment and selection process is to decide if there is a need to recruit and, if there is, to draft the recruitment documentation. This stage contains guidance on determining whether there is a need to fill a vacancy, and on how to analyse the job and prepare the job description and person specification.

### **Establish Whether a Post should be Created or Filled**

Whenever a post becomes vacant, it should be examined initially in consultation between the line manager and the human resources section, and then in line with the normal council processes, to ensure that it needs to be filled. The following questions should be considered:

- Does the work done by the previous postholder need to continue to be done?
- Should the post be located in the same section/department?

A vacancy can also occur when a new post is created against a pre-defined requirement for a task to be undertaken, for example, a grant funded post, job sharing arrangement, etc.

## **Analysing the Job**

Job analysis refers to the systematic process for collecting detailed and objective information about the tasks, responsibilities and the content of a job that will be performed or is currently being performed.

A number of methods can be used for job analysis, for example, interviews and questionnaires. However no one method is inherently more suitable than any other. Whichever method is used, a fundamental examination of the job should be undertaken to include whether the job should be done in the same way or if an alteration would be beneficial to the business needs of the organisation.

Once this analysis has been completed, and the continuing need for the job had been determined, it is important that the duties and responsibilities of the job are documented.

If councils routinely send new jobs to be job evaluated, this should be done at this stage.

## **Drafting the Job Description**

Where there is a vacancy to be filled, or a new post to be created, a job description must be compiled which provides an outline of the duties, responsibilities and functional framework of the post. A review of the job description is required each time a vacancy occurs to ensure that it is accurate, meaningful and up to date.

It is also useful to standardise job description frameworks to increase objectivity and avoid subjective decision making. **Annex 5** provides a model job description framework. Generally the job description should include the following:

- **Main Purpose and Objective of the Job**

This is a brief summary of the job, showing the main reason(s) why it exists and what it is expected to accomplish.

- **Reporting Relationships**

It is important to specify to whom the postholder reports and the people they are responsible for.

➤ **Main Functions and Duties of the Job**

This is a list of the tasks and activities which must be carried out in order that the objectives of the job are met.

➤ **Location**

The postholder's administrative base should be specified, together with a list of other locations where the postholder may be based on a temporary basis.

The length and complexity of the job description will vary according to the post. It should neither be too detailed and therefore too restrictive, nor too vague and therefore unclear.

### **Selection Criteria and the Person Specification**

Whereas job descriptions relate to the tasks to be undertaken, person specifications outline the attributes seen as necessary to do the job.

The selection criteria against which applicants will be measured should include:

- the shortlisting criteria, that is, qualifications and experience, and
- the required competencies, that is, knowledge, skills and personal qualities.

Both the shortlisting criteria and the competencies should be made explicit in the person specification.

~~There are a number of methods which can be used to develop a person specification. Traditionally, methods such as Rodger's seven-point plan and Fraser's five-point plan were used but a number of organisations are now moving towards a competency framework which focuses on the behaviours of job applicants.~~

The Competency Framework for Local Government outlines the sets of behaviours for employees working at strategic, operational and front line levels within individual councils and reflects the standards and behaviours expected of employees at an individual, team and organisational level.

In order to illustrate the recruitment and selection process, a competency framework has been used throughout the Code. However ~~the Commission recognises that~~ some councils may wish to use alternative, effective methods to develop a person specification.

## **Competence-Based Selection**

Competence is the ability to perform activities to the standard required in a post. It therefore involves an appropriate mix of knowledge, skills and personal qualities.

In competence-based interviews, panels look for examples of past behaviour which demonstrate the competence of each candidate. This approach can be contrasted with

the type of interview which encourages answers that are high on theory but tell the panel little about the candidates' experience and ability.

The interview and the assessment centre test the candidates against the competence framework for the post. Interview questions should be designed to elicit evidence of competence based on each candidate's past experience (see **Annex 12**, Sample Interview Assessment Form).

### **Drafting a Person Specification**

The line manager, in conjunction with the human resources section, should prepare a draft person specification for consideration by panel members at the preliminary meeting of the panel (see **Stage 2**, Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting).

Outlined below is a step-by-step approach for drawing up a person specification:

- Examine and analyse the job description
- Identify the key duties and responsibilities of the job
- Examine the overall structure of the section and compare with other similar posts
- Group similar duties in the job description together
- Convert each group of job duties into the appropriate competencies needed to carry out the job effectively under the key headings (taken from the Competency Framework for Local Government) of:
  - How we provide leadership and direction

- How we manage ourselves
- How we work with others
- How we move forward

The selection criteria for the job are identified from the process outlined above, against which the applicants will be assessed from. The criteria therefore relate directly to the person specification and outline the minimum requirements to do the job in terms of qualifications, experience, knowledge and personal attributes.

The clearer and more precise these criteria are, the more straightforward, consistent and less time consuming the later stages will be. It will also reduce the possibility of unintentional discrimination occurring.

The criteria should state the qualifications, experience and competencies which are absolutely necessary to carry out the duties of the post, and they should be able to be objectively justified. Particular care should be taken to avoid overstating the requirements in order to avoid directly or indirectly discriminating against applicants.

For example, requiring a significant number of years' experience may discriminate against younger people who may not have had the opportunity to gain the experience, unless this requirement can be objectively justified. For most senior posts, a maximum of 3 years' experience should not be exceeded.



Similarly, if a candidate is required to have academic qualifications, to avoid discriminating against migrant workers, councils should not specify that candidates should have qualifications that can only be obtained in the educational systems of Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland or Great Britain, for example, GCSEs, A Levels or Leaving Certificates. They should also consider equivalent qualifications gained in the other educational systems and councils should have a procedure for evaluating the comparative value of qualifications gained overseas. Advice on these matters can be obtained from:

- In Northern Ireland from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)
- The national agency responsible for providing information, advice and expert opinion on qualifications worldwide is the UK NARIC on [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk) or 0871 330 7033

The criteria are required in order that an accurate and focussed advertisement can be compiled and are also the basis for deciding which applicants to shortlist.

## **Setting Shortlisting Criteria**

The criteria used to shortlist are those elements of the selection criteria that can easily be measured from the completed application form. Applicants should be asked to demonstrate, on the application form, how they meet each criterion. The shortlisting criteria, as well as the competencies, will be tested further in the assessment arrangement, if one is used, and at interview.

## **Random Sampling**

Where councils are considering using random sampling for posts for which they receive large numbers of applicants and there are limited selection criteria, they should consult the Equality Commission for NI for further advice on individual recruitment exercises.

## **Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Chief Executive**

**Annex 6** provides specific guidance, in addition to the general provisions of this Code, for Chief Executive appointments.

**~~Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Group Chief Building Control Officer~~**

~~Annex 6~~ provides specific guidance, in addition to the general provisions of this Code, for Group Chief Building Control Officer appointments.

### ~~Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Group Chief Environmental Health Officer~~

~~Annex 7~~ provides specific guidance, in addition to the general provisions of this Code, for Group Chief Environmental Health Officer appointments.

## Annex 5

### Job Description Framework

A standard management type Job Description should contain -

\_\_\_\_\_ **Council**

**Job Title:** (this should be concise, whilst still conveying the true nature of the job) **Grade:**

**Department:** (shows the postholder's home department)

**Section:** (shows the postholder's home section)

**Responsible to:** (the postholder's direct line manager, and any indirect, lateral responsibility to managers in other departments or to outside bodies)

**Responsible for:** (the postholder's subordinates, direct and indirect)

**Main Location:** (the postholder's administrative base)

#### 1. **Main Purpose of the Job**

This is a brief summary of the job, showing the main reason for the job, and what it should accomplish.

## 2. **Specific Duties**

This is a list of the tasks and activities which must be carried out in order that the objectives of the job are met.

Specific duties may include -

- a list of DISCRETE TASKS which must be completed over time, possibly grouped with associated sub-tasks or operations;
- the level and nature of responsibility for -  
  
Human  
Financial  
Physical and  
Other Resources;
- the types and levels of contact with other departments, i.e. LATERAL RESPONSIBILITIES;
- STATUTORY AND DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES, where they have particular relevance to a job;
- RESPONSIBILITIES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS and at any other meetings/working parties, if this is a regular or important feature of the job;
- the PRODUCTION OF REPORTS, including committee reports, may be another specific duty (duties);
- the use of NEW TECHNOLOGY, which is often detailed in job descriptions as a specific task;

- FLEXIBILITY CLAUSES, which are generally inserted at the end of job descriptions, since specific duties can never be exhaustive. Flexibility within a grade, or with respect to the location of the post, may also be required.
- the awareness of STATUTORY DUTY (Section 75) obligations, the requirements of the council's equality scheme and the arrangements for equality impact assessment, appropriate to the grade and responsibilities.

Specific duties should show the degree of responsibility that the postholder has, i.e., what latitude in decision making does a postholder have in relation to the hierarchy of a department?

Specific duties should be arranged in order of importance, then in order of frequency of operation, i.e., important frequent tasks first, followed by important infrequent tasks, followed by more routine frequent tasks and so on.

## Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Clerk and Chief Executive

### 1. Introduction

All general provisions of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection are applicable to Chief Executive posts. The following points are specific to the recruitment and selection of Chief Executives and will also apply.

### 2. Administration

To demonstrate impartiality in the recruitment and selection process, the administration of the recruitment exercise will be carried out by ~~the Local Government Staff Commission~~ an independent third party.

### 3. Recruitment

Applications for the post of Clerk and Chief Executive will be sought only from those persons qualified in accordance with the *District Councils (Clerks Qualifications) Determination 1997 as detailed in Appendix 1 of this guidance note, or such further or amended Determination issued by the Department of the Environment.*

### 4. Training of Panel Members

All panel members must receive training to familiarise them with the recruitment and selection process, with particular reference to non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents.

In addition, the Chairperson should receive guidance on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.

## 5. Composition of the Shortlisting Panel

The shortlisting panel ~~council will consult with the Commission regarding the compilation of the shortlisting panel, which~~ will comprise:

- the Mayor/Chairperson of the council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council
- another two members of the council, appointed by the council
- two independent Professional Assessors
- ~~the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission.~~

Following nomination, should any panel member be unable to attend a meeting of the shortlisting panel, the council may designate a substitute.

~~The shortlisting panel will have the status of the 'Advisory Appointment Panel' referred to in Sections 40(4)(a) and 41(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.~~

The independent person administering the recruitment exercise will also attend the shortlisting panel meeting but will not have voting rights.



## 6. Chairing of Shortlisting Panel

The shortlisting panel will be chaired by ~~the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~ one of the independent Professional Assessors.

## 7. Shortlisting Criteria

~~As the Commission has responsibility for “establishing...bodies (to be known as ‘advisory appointment panels’) for the purpose of giving advice to councils on the suitability of applicants for appointment to the office of clerk”, the Commission should be consulted in the agreement of the shortlisting criteria.~~

~~The criteria should be agreed at an early stage and should be included in the information pack issued to potential applicants.~~

## 8. Consideration of Applications

The shortlisting panel will consider all applications received and will prepare a shortlist of candidates who meet the criteria. The panel will seek to be unanimous in their choice, but in the event of this not being achieved the **Commission** view of the independent Chair of the Panel will prevail.

## 9. Assessment Arrangements

Following the initial shortlisting of candidates, an assessment centre should be held for all Chief Executive appointments in order to provide the shortlisting panel with additional information on the candidates. The panel should agree how the information will be used, normally in a second stage of shortlisting to determine a final shortlist of candidates to be invited for interview.

All candidates who participate in the assessment arrangement should be offered feedback on their performance.

## 10. Composition of the Interviewing Panel

~~The council will consult with the Staff Commission regarding the composition of~~ The interview panel, ~~which~~ will comprise:

- The Mayor/Chairperson of the council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council
- not less than 4 and not more than 7 members of the council, appointed by the council
- ~~the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- two independent Professional Assessors ~~approved by the Local Government Staff Commission.~~
- *the independent person administering the process*

Only the Mayor/Chairperson and the elected members of the council on the interviewing panel will have voting rights.

The council will delegate full appointment authority to the interview panel to allow it to proceed to make an appointment.

Following nomination, should any panel member be unable to attend the interview panel, the council may designate a substitute.

## 11. Chairing of Interview Panel

The interview panel will be chaired by the Mayor/Chairperson of the council or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council.

## ~~12. Commission Role at the Interview Panel~~

~~The Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Staff Commission will undertake the role of Commission Observers at the interview stage.~~

## 13. Professional Assessors

~~The Commission will consult with~~ The council ~~to~~ will agree the appointment of two professional assessors who normally should have experience of the role of Chief Executive in local government in Northern Ireland/Ireland and Great Britain respectively. They have three key roles at the final selection stage:

- approving a number of core questions based on the competencies for the job and from which the interviewing panel will select those which will be put to the candidates
- assisting the panel members by asking follow-up and supplementary questions to elicit further information from the candidates after each presentation and interview
- advising the panel members on the competence of the candidates in relation to the requirements of the job.

## 14. Pre-Interview Meeting

Immediately prior to the first interview, the panel members, Professional Assessors and independent person administering the recruitment exercise ~~Staff Commission observers~~ should meet to agree the procedures, select the core questions and review the assessment form and other documentation that will be used during the selection process.

In agreeing a method of eliminating candidates and voting on an appointment, it should be noted that the holding of a secret ballot is not permitted.

The Chairperson should also seek assurances from panel members that they have not been canvassed in respect of any candidate.

## 15. Interview

The role of Chief Executive involves a considerable amount of public relations work, representing the council at many different events. To test the candidates' abilities in this important facet of the job at the interview stage, they should be asked to make a formal presentation on a relevant topic which is given to them in advance.

After giving the presentation, candidates should be required to take follow-up questions from panel members and the Professional Assessors in order to provide clarification or further information.

The interview itself should be based around a number of core questions designed to test how candidates can apply their knowledge and experience in key areas of the job.

Candidates should be given a copy of the core questions to follow while the Professional Assessors, Chairperson or panel members ask each question in turn. They should not be given the core questions for a specified time in advance of the interview in order to allow them to prepare their answers, nor should they be given a copy of the questions and invited to answer them in their own time and in the order they choose.

The Professional Assessors, Chairperson and panel members should be given the opportunity to ask supplementary questions to clarify or expand on the candidates' answers to the core questions and to facilitate interaction with the candidates.

## **16. Decision**

All candidates should be informed of the council's decision as soon as possible after the interviews, although it is recognised that in some cases an appointment may not be confirmed until references have been taken up and a medical report received.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972**

#### **District Councils (Clerks Qualifications) Determination 1997**

##### **Summary Provisions**

The Department of the Environment in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 41 (3) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972(a) hereby determines that with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> July 1997 a person shall not be appointed to the office of Clerk, Deputy Clerk or Assistant Clerk of a council unless he/she possesses a qualification specified in Appendix 1 hereto, or a qualification equivalent to that qualification obtained in any state.

##### **Appendix 1**

##### **List of Qualifications**

A person shall not be appointed unless he/she:

1. Holds a primary or post graduate degree of a university or body which is authorised by or under Royal Charter or statute (or an equivalent university or body outside the United Kingdom) to grant degrees;

or

2. Holds the Diploma in Public Administration or the Diploma in Municipal Administration of such a university or body;

or

3. Is qualified by examination as a member of one or more of the following bodies -

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland;  
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales;  
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland;  
The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants;  
The Chartered Association of Certified Accountants;  
The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy;  
The Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators;

or

**4.** Has adequate and suitable experience of public administration.

## ~~**Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Group Chief Building Control Officer**~~

### ~~**1. — Introduction**~~

~~All general provisions of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection are applicable to Group Building Control Officer posts. The following points are specific to the recruitment and selection of Group Chief Building Control Officers and will also apply.~~

### ~~**2. — Administration**~~

~~In order to facilitate councils in the appointment of a Group Chief Building Control Officer, the administration of the recruitment and selection process may, at the request of the Employer Council, be undertaken by the Staff Commission.~~

### ~~**3. — Recruitment**~~

~~Applications for the post of Group Chief Building Control Officer will be sought only from those persons qualified in accordance with the Group Chief Building Control Officer (Qualifications) Determination 1996 as detailed in Appendix 1 of this annex, or such further or amended Determination issued by the Department of the Environment.~~

~~“Employer Council” means a council responsible for the employment of Group Building Control staff.~~

~~“Group” means councils on behalf of which Group Building Control staff are employed by an Employer Council.~~



#### ~~4. Training of Panel Members~~

~~All panel members must receive training to familiarise them with the recruitment and selection process, with particular reference to non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents.~~

~~In addition, the Chairperson should receive guidance on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.~~

#### ~~5. Composition of the Shortlisting Panel~~

~~The Employer Council should delegate appointment authority and establish a shortlisting panel comprising the following, reflecting the nature of the Group:~~

- ~~• the Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate Appointment Committee of the Council~~
- ~~• 1 member of the Employer Council appointed by the Employer Council~~
- ~~• 1 member of the Group Committee – from a council other than the Employer Council – appointed by the Group Committee~~
- ~~• the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission.~~

~~All members of the shortlisting panel will have voting rights.~~

~~Following nomination, should any panel member be unable to attend a meeting of the panel, the nominating body may designate a substitute.~~

~~The shortlisting panel will have the status of 'advisory appointment panels' referred to in Sections 40(4)(a) and 41(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.~~

#### ~~6.——Chairing of Shortlisting Panel~~

~~A shortlisting panel may be chaired by the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission or elected by the panel, if required.~~

#### ~~7.——Shortlisting Criteria~~

~~The criteria should be agreed at an early stage and should be included in the information pack issued to potential applicants.~~

#### ~~8.——Consideration of Applications~~

~~The panel will consider all applications received and will prepare a shortlist of candidates who meet the criteria. The panel will seek to be unanimous in their choice but in the event of this not being achieved the Commission will make a recommendation accordingly.~~

#### ~~9.——Assessment Arrangements~~

~~Following the initial shortlisting of candidates, an assessment centre should be held in order to provide the shortlisting panel with additional information on the candidates. The panel should agree how the information will be used, normally in a second stage of shortlisting to determine a final shortlist of candidates to be invited for interview.~~

~~All candidates who participate in the assessment arrangement should be offered feedback on their performance.~~

## ~~10. — Composition of the Interview Panel~~

~~The interview panel should comprise:~~

- ~~• the Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the Council~~
- ~~• 2 members of the Employer Council, appointed by the Employer Council~~
- ~~• 2 members of the Group Committee, from councils other than the Employer Council, appointed by the Group Committee~~
- ~~• the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Professional Assessor(s).~~

~~Only the Mayor/Chairperson and elected members on the interview panel will have voting rights.~~

## ~~11. — Chairing of the Interview Panel~~

~~The interview panel will be chaired by the Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council.~~

## ~~12. — Commission Role at the Interview Panel~~

~~The Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Staff Commission will undertake the role of Commission Observers at the interview stage.~~

### **~~13. Professional Assessors~~**

~~For Group Chief Building Control Officer appointments, one or two Professional Assessors should be appointed to assist at the shortlisting and interview stage. The council should consult with the Commission to agree appropriate assessor(s).~~

~~They have three key roles at the final selection stage:~~

- ~~• approving a number of core questions based on the competencies for the job and from which the interview panel will select those which will be put to the candidates~~
- ~~• assisting the panel members by asking follow-up and supplementary questions to elicit further information from the candidates after each presentation and interview~~
- ~~• advising the panel members on the competence of the candidates in relation to the requirements of the job.~~

### **~~14. Pre-Interview Meeting~~**

~~Immediately prior to the first interview, the panel members, professional assessors and Staff Commission observers should meet to agree the procedures, select the core questions and review the assessment form and other documentation that will be used during the selection process.~~

~~In agreeing a method of eliminating candidates and voting on an appointment, it should be noted that the holding of a secret ballot is not permitted.~~

~~The Chairperson should also seek assurances from panel members that they have not been canvassed in respect of any candidate.~~

## **15. Interview**

*The interview itself should be based around a number of core questions designed to test how candidates can apply their knowledge and experience in key areas of the job.*

*Candidates should be given a copy of the core questions to follow while the Professional Assessors, Chairperson or panel members ask each question in turn. They should not be given the core questions for a specified time in advance of the interview in order to allow them to prepare their answers, nor should they be given a copy of the questions and invited to answer them in their own time and in the order they choose.*

*The Professional Assessors, Chairperson and panel members should be given the opportunity to ask supplementary questions to clarify or expand on the candidates' answers to the core questions and to facilitate interaction with the candidates.*

## **16. Decision**

*All candidates should be informed of the council's decision as soon as possible after the interviews, although it is recognised that in some cases an appointment may not be confirmed until references have been taken up and a medical report received.*

## **~~Appendix 1~~**

### **~~Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972~~**

#### **~~Group Chief Building Control Officer (Qualifications) Determination 1997~~**

##### **~~Summary Provisions~~**

~~The Department of the Environment in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 41(3) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (a) hereby determines that with effect from 30 July 1997 a person shall not be qualified to be appointed to the office of Group Chief Building Control Officer of a council group, as defined in the Local Government (Employment of Group Building Control Staff) Order (NI) 1994 (b), unless he is qualified by examination to be a full member of one or more of the professional bodies specified in Appendix 1 hereto, or the equivalent membership of an equivalent professional body in any State.~~

## **~~Appendix 1~~**

### **~~List of Professional Bodies~~**

- ~~1. — Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;~~
- ~~2. — Royal Institute of British Architects;~~
- ~~3. — Institution of Structural Engineers;~~
- ~~4. — Association of Building Engineers;~~
- ~~5. — Institution of Civil Engineers;~~
- ~~6. — Institute of Building Control;~~
- ~~7. — Chartered Institute of Building.~~

## ~~Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Group Chief Environmental Health Officer~~

### ~~1. — Introduction~~

~~All general provisions of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection are applicable to Group Environmental Health Officer posts. The following points are specific to the recruitment and selection of Group Chief Environmental Health Officers and will also apply.~~

### ~~2. — Administration~~

~~In order to facilitate councils in the appointment of a Group Chief Environmental Health Officer, the administration of the recruitment and selection process may, at the request of the Employer Council, be undertaken by the Commission.~~

### ~~3. — Recruitment~~

~~Applications for the post of Group Chief Environmental Health Officer will be sought only from those persons qualified in accordance with the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer (Qualifications) Determination 1996 as detailed in **Appendix 1** of this annex, or such further or amended Determination issued by the Department of the Environment.~~

~~“Employer Council” means a council responsible for the employment of Group Environmental Health staff.~~

~~“Group” means councils on behalf of which Group Environmental Health staff are employed by an Employer Council.~~

#### ~~4. Training of Panel Members~~

~~All panel members must receive training to familiarise them with the recruitment and selection process, with particular reference to non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents.~~

~~In addition, the Chairperson should receive guidance on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.~~

#### ~~5. Composition of the Shortlisting Panel~~

~~The employer council should delegate appointing authority and establish a shortlisting panel comprised of the following, reflecting the nature of the Group:~~

- ~~• The Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council~~
- ~~• 1 member of the Employer Council appointed by the Employer Council~~
- ~~• 1 member of the Group Committee - from a council other than the Employer Council - appointed by the Group Committee~~
- ~~• the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission~~

~~All members of the shortlisting panel will have voting rights.~~



~~Following nomination, should any panel member be unable to attend a meeting of the panel, the nominating body may designate a substitute.~~

~~Shortlisting panel will have the status of 'advisory appointment panels' referred to in Sections 40(4)(a) and 41(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.~~

#### ~~6.——Chairing of Shortlisting Panel~~

~~A shortlisting panel may be chaired by the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission or elected by the panel, if required.~~

#### ~~7.——Shortlisting Criteria~~

~~The criteria should be agreed at an early stage and should be included in the information pack issued to potential applicants.~~

#### ~~8.——Consideration of Applications~~

~~The panel will consider all applications received and will prepare a shortlist of candidates who meet the criteria. The panel will seek to be unanimous in their choice but in the event of this not being achieved the Commission will make a recommendation accordingly.~~

#### ~~9.——Assessment Arrangements~~

~~Following the initial shortlisting of candidates, an assessment centre should be held in order to provide the shortlisting panel with additional information on the candidates. The panel should agree how the information will be used, normally in a second stage of shortlisting to determine a final shortlist of candidates to be invited for interview.~~

~~All candidates who participate in the assessment arrangement should be offered feedback on their performance.~~

#### ~~10. — Composition of the Interview Panel~~

~~The interview panel should comprise:~~

- ~~• the Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council, or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council~~
- ~~• 2 members of the Employer Council, appointed by the Employer Council~~
- ~~• 2 members of the Group Committee, from councils other than the Employer Council, appointed by the Group Committee~~
- ~~• the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission~~
- ~~• the Professional Assessor(s).~~

~~Only the Mayor/Chairperson and elected members on the interview panel will have voting rights.~~

#### ~~11. — Chairing of the Interview Panel~~

~~The interview panel will be chaired by the Mayor/Chairperson of the Council or the Chairperson of an appropriate appointment committee of the council.~~

## **~~12.—Commission Role at the Interview Panel~~**

~~The Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Staff Commission will undertake the role of Commission Observers at the interview stage.~~

## **~~13.—Professional Assessors~~**

~~For Group Chief Environmental Health Officer appointments, one or two Professional Assessors should be appointed to assist at the shortlisting and interview stage. The council should consult with the Commission to agree appropriate assessor(s).~~

~~They have three key roles at the final selection stage:~~

- ~~• approving a number of core questions based on the competencies for the job and from which the interview panel will select those which will be put to the candidates~~
- ~~• assisting the panel members by asking follow-up and supplementary questions to elicit further information from the candidates after each presentation and interview~~
- ~~• advising the panel members on the competence of the candidates in relation to the requirements of the job.~~

## **~~14.—Pre-Interview Meeting~~**

~~Immediately prior to the first interview, the panel members, professional assessors and Staff Commission observers should meet to agree the procedures, select the core questions and review the assessment form and other documentation that will be used during the selection process.~~

~~In agreeing a method of eliminating candidates and voting on an appointment, it should be noted that the holding of a secret ballot is not permitted.~~

~~The Chairperson should also seek assurances from panel members that they have not been canvassed in respect of any candidate.~~

#### **15.—Interview**

~~The interview itself should be based around a number of core questions designed to test how candidates can apply their knowledge and experience in key areas of the job.~~

~~Candidates should be given a copy of the core questions to follow while the Professional Assessors, Chairperson or panel members ask each question in turn. They should not be given the core questions for a specified time in advance of the interview in order to allow them to prepare their answers, nor should they be given a copy of the questions and invited to answer them in their own time and in the order they choose.~~

~~The Professional Assessors, Chairperson and panel members should be given the opportunity to ask supplementary questions to clarify or expand on the candidates' answers to the core questions and to facilitate interaction with the candidates.~~

#### **16.—Decision**

~~All candidates should be informed of the council's decision as soon as possible after the interviews, although it is recognised that in some cases an appointment may not be confirmed until references have been taken up and a medical report received.~~

## ~~Appendix 1~~

### ~~Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972~~

#### ~~Group Chief Environmental Health Officer (Qualifications) Determination 1998~~

##### ~~Summary Provisions~~

~~The Department of the Environment in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 41 (3) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (a) hereby determines that with effect from 1 April 1998 a person shall not be appointed to the office of the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer of a council group, as defined in the Local Government (Employment of Group Environmental Health Staff) Order (Northern Ireland) 1994 (b), unless he possesses a qualification specified in Appendix 1 hereto, or a qualification equivalent to that qualification obtained in any State.~~

##### ~~Appendix 1~~

###### ~~List of Qualifications~~

~~A person shall not be appointed unless he:~~

~~1. Possesses one or more of the following qualifications—~~

- ~~(a) The Certificate or Diploma of the Public Health Inspectors' Education Board;~~
- ~~(b) The Sanitary Inspectors' Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute and Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Joint Board;~~
- ~~(c) The Sanitary Inspectors' Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board;~~
- ~~(d) The Diploma in Environmental Health of the Environmental Health Officers' Education Board;~~

- ~~(e) The Certificate of Registration of the Environmental Health Officers' Registration Board;~~
- ~~(f) The Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Association of Scotland;~~
- ~~(g) The Sanitary Inspectors' Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute for appointments outside England and Wales;~~
- ~~(h) The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland Diploma in Environmental Health~~
- ~~(i) A BSc in Environmental Health; and~~

~~is a corporate member, or is eligible to be a corporate member, of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health~~

**Stage 2:**

**Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting**

## **Stage 2 – Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting**

This stage in the recruitment process guides the user through establishing who should sit on the panel and the preliminary meeting of the panel, planning the recruitment and selection process and agreeing the job description and person specification.

The composition of selection panels is of vital importance because the panel should consist only of those persons best placed to make the appointment and they should possess the necessary skills and experience to do so. An individual who is a professional human resources officer should be included as a panel member or be available for ongoing consultation at all stages of the recruitment process (in accordance with the matrices of panel composition in **Annex 8 7**).

### **Panel Composition**

Panels should be convened as detailed in the matrices of panel composition in **Annex 7**.

Shortlisting and interview panels, as far as is reasonably practicable, should consist of both men and women and be representative of both main communities within Northern Ireland.



The Commission appreciates that, in order to fulfil the duty to reflect the gender and community balance, or a council's wish to include under-represented groups or people with disabilities, it may be necessary for the council to seek the approval of the ~~Commission~~ Chief Executive to amend the recommended composition of the panel (as defined in **Annex 7**) as he/she has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Code (see page C:3).

### **Annex 7 details the matrices of panel composition**

The composition of the panel should be established at an early stage to allow panel members to agree the selection criteria and so to be fully aware of the requirements of the post when shortlisting and interviewing.

If the situation arises where suitable expertise is not available "in-house" to participate as a panel member in a recruitment exercise, then expertise may be "borrowed" from another council.

If a panel member is unable to attend a meeting of the shortlisting and/or interview panel, a substitute can be used.

### ***Panel Composition for Shared Posts***

~~There are a number of posts in councils which are shared between councils or shared with, or funded by, external bodies. While it is difficult to provide general guidelines in relation to these posts, the following framework is useful for ensuring the involvement of all partners in the recruitment process:~~

- ~~• Where the council is clearly the employer and employs staff on behalf of the external body, then the panel should be constituted as detailed in the Code of Procedures. Representatives from the external body may be invited to observe the process but should not participate in any way.~~
- ~~• Where a service level agreement exists between the council and the external body, the terms of the agreement would have to be examined but in general terms, the panel should be constituted as detailed in the Code of Procedures.~~
- ~~• Where the external body is the employer but wishes to use the expertise of the council to administer the recruitment process, the panel may comprise:
  - ~~○ 2 representatives of the external body~~
  - ~~○ a representative of the human resources section or the Chief Executive's nominee~~~~

~~The Commission notes the intention behind the creation of these posts and understands that councils wish to keep all the constituents working together on these matters. If~~

~~councils have any difficulty with the general advice in this section, they should contact Commission officers for further more specific guidance.~~

## **The Role of the Human Resources Section**

The role of the human resources section in the recruitment and selection process is important and generally includes:

- Consulting with the line manager to undertake a job analysis, using the local government competency framework, to provide expertise and consistency of approach,
- Assisting the line manager to review and modify the job description and person specification. The line manager, in conjunction with the human resources section, can prepare the draft documentation for the panel to consider at its preliminary meeting.
- Providing professional advice to the panel. For expertise in employment law and Tribunal decisions, it is important to have professional advice and assistance at all stages of the recruitment process.
- Preparing documentation, for example, the application form, shortlisting form, interview assessment form in order to have a consistent approach to the assessment of candidates at each stage of the selection process.

- Arranging for the advertisement of the vacancy to be placed in the media in line with council policy, and on the local government recruitment portal, 'Local Government Jobs NI' ([www.localgovernmentjobsni.gov.uk](http://www.localgovernmentjobsni.gov.uk)) in order that it can be viewed/accessed by the widest possible pool of potential applicants.
- Receiving all completed applications returned by the closing time and date and ensuring these are properly recorded.
- Ensuring that the monitoring form is retained by the Monitoring Officer.
- Advising applicants of their progress through the recruitment process in a timely manner
- Processing any complaints, in conjunction with the Chairperson of the panel, in a professional and courteous manner and ensuring that they are dealt with consistently and fairly.

### **Training of Panel Members**

All panel members should be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the content of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents.

The objective of the training should be that those involved in the recruitment process should be able to effectively apply selection procedures which are objective, structured, standardised and job-related and which take account of the principle of equality of opportunity for all.

Training programmes should be updated at regular intervals and refresher training for individuals should be undertaken at least every three years.

In addition, the person chairing the panel should receive guidance on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.

### **The Role of the Professional Assessor**

The purpose of the Professional Assessor is to give guidance to interview panels on the professional and technical suitability of applicants. They may also provide information on any point requiring clarification, for example, qualifications and level of experience at the shortlisting stage.

The Council should appoint a Professional Assessor where sufficient expertise in the key functional areas of the post does not exist within the panel. Even if such expertise does exist, it may be advisable to appoint a Professional Assessor for senior posts, where there are a number of internal applicants.

Where possible, the Professional Assessor should assist in:

- agreeing the person specification

- determining the shortlisting criteria before the post is advertised in order to avoid any errors or problems in interpretation at the shortlisting meeting

The Professional Assessor should participate fully in the recruitment and selection process but does not have voting rights.

Details of all the circumstances relating to the appointment and use of Assessors are set out in **Annex 9-8 – Scheme of Professional Assessors and Annex 10-9 – Guidance Notes for Professional Assessors Attending Selection Panels in Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.**

### ***~~The Role of Commission Observers~~***

*~~Commission Observers will attend meetings of shortlisting and interview panels, in accordance with the Commission's Observer Strategy.~~*

*~~Commission members or officers, and other individuals appointed to the Commission's Panel of Observers, attend meetings of selection panels in the role of Observer to ensure that the Code of Procedures is properly implemented, in so far as this is possible, and on the basis of the information relating to the appointment which the Observer is aware of, or which is made available by the council.~~*

~~Commission Observers will not be entitled to vote, but shall be afforded an opportunity to raise such questions as are deemed consistent with the Code.~~

### ~~**Consideration of Observer Reports by the Commission**~~

~~A checklist has been designed to guide the Commission Observer through the various stages of the recruitment process, highlighting the role of both Commission officers and the Observer.~~

~~These checklists form the basis of reports from Commission Observers and are discussed at Commission meetings on a regular basis to ensure consistency with the Code.~~

~~The Commission will prepare periodic improvement reports highlighting good practice and recommendations for improvement, which will be issued to councils.~~

### ~~**Commission Observer's 'Approval' Role**~~

~~The Commission Observer's 'approval' role should be on the basis that:~~

- ~~• the Code of Procedures has been properly implemented, in so far as this is possible, and on the basis of the information relating to the appointment which the Observer is aware of, or which is made available by the council.~~

- ~~• the process used to select the successful candidate was fair and reasonable, and in line with relevant employment legislation.~~

### ~~Commission Observer's Concerns Regarding the Appointment Process~~

~~In the event that an Observer is concerned about any aspect of the implementation of the Code, the following procedures should be followed:~~

- ~~• The Observer will raise the issue with the members of the panel directly at the time in an attempt to resolve the matter.~~
- ~~• If the Observer is not satisfied, he/she will raise his/her concern with the Chief Executive of the Commission in order to seek further clarification and advice.~~
- ~~• Commission officers will attempt to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward with the panel members at the panel meeting.~~
- ~~• In the event of agreement not being reached, the council should suspend the appointment process until a Commission recommendation is issued in line with Section 40 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.~~



~~Where Observers identify a specific problem, this should be reported immediately to the council Chief Executive. The Commission has delegated responsibility to the Chief Executive of the Commission, in consultation with the Chairperson where deemed necessary, to issue a statutory recommendation on behalf of the Commission, to a council regarding the appointment process.~~

## **Canvassing**

Canvassing of officers or elected members of the council, directly or indirectly, in conjunction with any appointment under the council shall disqualify the candidate. An officer or member of the council shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the council.

Where a panel member is a councillor, he/she has a statutory duty in this regard under Section 30 (1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 which states:

“Every councillor shall disclose to the council in writing any relevant family relationship known to him to exist between himself and any person who he knows holds, or is a candidate for appointment to, any office under the council”.

Under Section 30 (2) (b), as a councillor is required to withdraw from any meeting where the question relating to a relevant family relationship is under consideration, clearly he/she cannot sit on an interview panel. To act in contravention of this section constitutes a summary offence.

The council will ensure that officers and members of the council involved as voting or non-voting members in any part of the shortlisting or interviewing process will not participate in such procedures if a family relationship, as defined in the next paragraph, is known to exist between the panel member and any person who is applying for a particular post within the council.

For the purposes of this paragraph, a relevant family relationship shall be deemed to exist between a council officer and/or member and a person who is a candidate for employment (or promotion) with the council if they are husband or wife, or partner (civil or otherwise) or if the person who is a candidate for employment (or promotion) is the:

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Grandson or Grand-daughter
- Son or Daughter
- Brother or Sister
- Uncle or Aunt
- Nephew or Niece

of the council officer or member, or the spouse or partner (civil or otherwise) of the council officer or member.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Responsibility is placed on every panel member to disclose to an appropriate manager or officer of the council where potential conflict of interest may be present, for example, partners or persons where a family relationship is deemed to exist, or if an individual has agreed to act as a referee for an applicant. For more detailed guidance in this area, please refer to the council's Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

Where a potential conflict of interest exists, the issue is not about satisfying the conscience of the individual. Public perceptions, and also those of other candidates, must be considered and, in such cases, it may be appropriate for the individual to withdraw from the recruitment exercise.

### **Preliminary Meeting of the Panel**

Having decided on the composition of the panel, it is recommended as good practice, particularly for senior posts, that the panel hold a preliminary meeting to discuss and agree all matters relevant to the recruitment process, in advance of the vacancy being publicly advertised. At this meeting, all panel members should be made fully aware of the job purpose and be familiar with all stages in the recruitment process.

In practice, the human resources section and the line manager will have delegated powers to carry forward the main purposes of the preliminary meeting on behalf of the panel. However it is important that all panel members have a clear understanding of the job requirements, the person specification and the selection criteria.

The aim of the preliminary meeting of the panel is to:

- consider the job description and the person specification which should be prepared in advance by the line manager, in conjunction with the human resources section (refer to Stage 1, Drafting the Recruitment Documentation)
- determine and agree the shortlisting criteria which are taken from the person specification (refer to Stage 4, Shortlisting)
- agree assessment arrangements, where relevant (refer to Stage 5, Assessment Arrangements)
- agree a timetable for each stage of the recruitment process

## **Timetable for the Recruitment and Selection Process**

All panel members must agree a timetable for each stage of the recruitment process.

Where appropriate, ~~the Commission Observer~~ and Professional Assessor should also be consulted.

It is recommended that the timetable for the recruitment exercise is issued to those requesting application forms. This allows applicants to make suitable arrangements to attend assessment centres and the interview, and informs them as to when they might hear if they have been shortlisted.

Where applicants specify dates on which they will not be available for interview, the council should include a statement to the effect that they will try as far as possible to accommodate applicants but are under no obligation to do so. If such a waiver is not included, an applicant may object if the interviews are arranged for one of the dates specified.

## Matrix of Panel Composition

	Chief Executive	Directors	All other Posts	Posts Graded Scales 1 & 2
<b>Shortlisting Panel</b>	Mayor/Chairperson or chair of an appropriate appointment committee  2 other elected members  2 Professional Assessors <del>Chairperson of LGSC</del> <del>Chief Executive of LGSC</del> <del>LGSC Observer*</del>	Mayor/Chairperson or chair of an appropriate appointment committee  1 other elected member  Chief Executive  1 Director  Professional Assessor * <del>LGSC Observer*</del>	Head of Department of other senior officer  HR Officer  Senior Officer at equal or higher grade  <del>LGSC Observer*</del>  Professional Assessor *	Minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 panel members to include:  Department Representative  HR Officer
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	<del>Chairperson of LGSC</del> A Professional Assessor	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel
<b>Interview Panel</b>	Mayor/Chairperson or chair of an appropriate appointment committee  4 to 7 other elected members  <del>Chairperson of LGSC*</del> <del>Chief Executive of LGSC*</del>  2 Professional Assessors*	As for shortlisting Panel	As for shortlisting Panel	As for shortlisting Panel
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	Mayor/Chairperson or chair of an appropriate appointment committee	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel

\* indicates no voting rights

**Matrix of Panel Composition – Group Building Control**

	<b>Group Chief Building Control Officer</b>	<b>Group Directors and Chief Officers</b>	<b>All other Group Posts</b>
<b>Shortlisting Panel</b>	<p>Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council</p> <p>1 member of the Employer Council</p> <p>1 member of the Group Committee</p> <p>Chairperson of LGSC</p> <p>Chief Executive of LGSC</p> <p>LGSC Observer*</p>	<p>Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council</p> <p>1 member of the Group Committee</p> <p>Chief Executive of the Employer Council</p> <p>Group Chief Building Control Officer</p> <p>Chief Executive from the Group</p> <p>Professional Assessor*</p> <p>LGSC Observer*</p>	<p>Group Chief Building Control Officer or nominee</p> <p>HR Officer</p> <p>Senior Officer in a Group Council</p> <p>LGSC Observer*</p> <p>Professional Assessor*</p>
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	Chairperson of LGSC	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel
<b>Interview Panel</b>	<p>Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council</p> <p>2 members of the Employer Council</p> <p>2 members of the Group Committee</p> <p>Chairperson of LGSC*</p> <p>Chief Executive of LGSC*</p> <p>2 Professional Assessors*</p>	As for shortlisting Panel	As for shortlisting Panel
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council	Elected by Panel	Elected by Panel

\* indicates no voting rights



### **Matrix of Panel Composition – Group Environmental Health**

	<b>Group Chief Environmental Health Officer</b>	<b>Group Directors and Chief Officers</b>	<b>All other Group Posts</b>
<b>Shortlisting Panel</b>	<del>Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council</del>  <del>1 member of the Employer Council</del>  <del>1 member of the Group Committee</del>  <del>Chairperson of LGSC</del>  <del>Chief Executive of LGSC</del>  <del>LGSC Observer*</del>	<del>Mayor/Chairperson of the Employer Council</del>  <del>1 member of the Group Committee</del>  <del>Chief Executive of the Employer Council</del>  <del>Group Chief Environmental Health Officer</del>  <del>Chief Executive from the Group</del>  <del>Professional Assessor*</del>  <del>LGSC Observer*</del>	<del>Group Chief Environmental Health Officer or nominee</del>  <del>HR Officer</del>  <del>Senior Officer in a Group Council</del>  <del>LGSC Observer*</del>  <del>Professional Assessor*</del>
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	<del>Chairperson of LGSC</del>	<del>Elected by Panel</del>	<del>Elected by Panel</del>
<b>Interview Panel</b>	<del>Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council</del>  <del>2 members of the Employer Council</del>  <del>2 members of the Group Committee</del>  <del>Chairperson of LGSC*</del>  <del>Chief Executive of LGSC*</del>  <del>2 Professional Assessors*</del>	<del>As for shortlisting Panel</del>	<del>As for shortlisting Panel</del>
<b>Chairperson of Panel</b>	<del>Mayor/Chairperson of the employer council</del>	<del>Elected by Panel</del>	<del>Elected by Panel</del>

*\* indicates no voting rights*

## Scheme of Professional Assessors

This scheme provides for the appointment of Professional Assessors as detailed in **Stage 2 – Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting.**

### 1. Appointment of a Professional Assessor to a Panel

- 1.1 A council may wish to appoint a Professional Assessor to a shortlisting and/or interviewing panel, which will normally be in circumstances where expertise does not exist within the council.
- 1.2 Where possible the Professional Assessor should be a serving officer from another council or be employed within the public service but, where appropriate, a person from outside the service or a retired officer may be used.
- 1.3 No Professional Assessor shall be appointed from a council from which applicants for the post are to be considered by the panel.
- 1.4 The current/previous postholder should not be involved as a Professional Assessor in the recruitment exercise to select his/her successor.
- 1.5 The council will advise the Professional Assessor of the time and place of the shortlisting and interview panel meetings and will supply in advance the appropriate documents relating to the post in question.

## **2. Function of the Professional Assessor**

- 2.1 The role of the Professional Assessor is to give advice to councils on the professional and technical suitability of applicants throughout the recruitment process.

## **3. Level of Officer as Professional Assessor**

- 3.1 An officer shall be appointed as a Professional Assessor only where he/she occupies a post for which grading and status is equal to, or senior to, the post to be filled.

## **4. The Professional Assessor and the Shortlisting Panel**

- 4.1 The Professional Assessor is a non-voting member of the panel.
- 4.2 The Professional Assessor shall assist the shortlisting panel to agree the criteria before any panel member has sight of the application forms. The Professional Assessor should give their views and advice on the professional and technical suitability of all the applicants and provide information on any point requiring clarification.
- 4.3 The Professional Assessor is not required to make a written submission to the council ~~or Group employer~~.
- 4.4 The Professional Assessor will regard the proceedings of the shortlisting panel as confidential.

## **5. The Professional Assessor and the Interview Panel**

- 5.1 Paragraphs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 will all similarly apply in procedures relating to interview panels.
- 5.2 The Professional Assessor should be asked to devise a number of questions based on the job description and person specification and suggested evidence required in the answers.
- 5.3 The Professional Assessor may be asked to put questions to all candidates after the Chairperson's introduction. The Professional Assessor may also be asked to put any supplementary questions to the candidates to clarify or expand on their answers to core questions.
- 5.4 Where a presentation exercise is used as part of the selection procedure the Professional Assessor may be asked to advise the panel on the professional and technical merit of each presentation.

## **6. Expenses of the Professional Assessor**

- 6.1 The Professional Assessor will be paid travelling and subsistence expenses by the council ~~or Group employer~~ making the appointment. In the case of a Professional Assessor who is an officer of a council, such expenses shall be met by the council which employs him/her.
- 6.2 For Professional Assessors who are local government employees, the expenses paid will be on the same basis as those rates currently in operation for officers of the council.

6.3 For Professional Assessor employed outside the local government service, fees and expenses shall be agreed and paid by the council appointing the Professional Assessor.

## **7. Guidance Notes for Professional Assessors**

7.1 Persons appointed to act as Professional Assessor will be provided with the **Commission** document “Guidance Notes for Professional Assessors Attending Selection Panels in Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive” (See **Annex 8**). The council should provide the Professional Assessor with a copy of this document in advance of the shortlisting/interview panel.

## Guidance Notes for Professional Assessors Attending Selection Panels in Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

These notes provide guidance for those people appointed to act as Professional Assessor in a selection procedure as defined in the ~~Commission's~~ Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, **Stage 2 - Establishing the Panel and the Preliminary Meeting**, either in a council or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

### 1. Purpose

Your purpose as a Professional Assessor is to give advice to the council/NIHE on the professional and technical suitability of applicants for appointment.

### 2. General Information

As a Professional Assessor you should occupy a post for which the grading and/or status is equal to, or senior to, the post to be filled.

The current or previous postholder should not be involved as a Professional Assessor in the recruitment exercise to select his/her successor.

### 3. Appointment to a Panel

You may be asked by a council, the NIHE or ~~the Commission~~ to act as a Professional Assessor to a panel.

The council/NIHE will advise you of the time and place of the shortlisting and interview panel meetings and will supply you, in advance, with the appropriate documents relating to the post in question.

The council/NIHE making the appointment will ensure that:-

- (a) you have not been named as a referee for any candidate(s) applying to the advertisement or trawl notice for the post in question;
- (b) you are not participating in a selection procedure involving any candidate(s) employed by your employer.

You should not have access to the application forms until the shortlisting criteria have been agreed by the panel.

#### **4. The Shortlisting Panel**

Before the panel meets you should familiarise yourself with the documentation, in particular the job description and person specification. You may also wish to discuss the post with the Head of Department in the council/NIHE where the vacancy has occurred.

You should assist the shortlisting panel to agree the criteria before any panel member has had sight of the application forms. The criteria should be linked directly to the person specification and should be easily measurable from the application form.

At the panel meeting you should give your views and advice on the professional and technical suitability of all applicants and provide information on any point requiring clarification, for example qualifications and level of experience.

You may participate fully in any discussions but you do not have voting rights.

You are not required to make a written submission to the council/NIHE.

You should not discuss the applicants outside the proceedings. All information on candidate(s) should be held by you as confidential.

## **5. The Selection Panel**

You may be asked to devise a number of interview questions based on the job description and person specification. The key areas to be addressed in the questions should be agreed with the shortlisting panel. You should also prepare evidence required in the answers to the questions. If the council/NIHE wishes to devise the questions themselves they should be agreed with you in advance of the interview(s).

You may be asked to put the questions to the candidates after the Chairperson's introduction. You may also be asked to put any supplementary questions to the candidate(s) to clarify or expand on their answers to the core questions and to facilitate interaction between the panel and the candidate(s).

The candidate(s) may also be required to make a short presentation to the panel and you may be asked to suggest a topic for the presentation. Where a presentation exercise is used as part of the selection procedure you may be asked to advise the panel on the professional and technical merit of each presentation.

As with the shortlisting process, you may participate fully in any discussions but you do not have voting rights.

You should take notes on the candidates' answers to the questions and on their suitability for the post in relation to the selection criteria.



At the close of the interviews these notes should be handed in to the human resources officer for retention and are discoverable in the event of a complaint to a Tribunal or other appropriate investigative body.

When the last candidate has withdrawn, the Chairperson will invite you to comment on the professional and technical competence of each candidate and to supply information on any point requiring clarification by panel members.

Your comments should be restricted to the professional and technical competence of each candidate and care must be taken not to lead the panel members. Although you may wish to 'mark' candidates in relation to the criteria for your own purposes, you should not give panel members a suggested mark for each candidate.

You should not discuss the applicants outside the proceedings. All information on candidate(s) should be held by you as confidential.

The sex, marital status, pregnancy, disability, racial group, age, dependants, religious beliefs or political opinion of the applicants should not be taken into consideration unless specifically mentioned in the advertisement and permitted by law.

## **6. Feedback to applicants**

Following the interviews, you may be asked to give feedback to applicants on their performance at interview, on behalf of the panel.

## **7. Expenses**

You will be paid travelling and subsistence expenses by the council/NIHE making the appointment but, if you are an officer of a council/NIHE, such expenses will be met by the council/NIHE which employs you.

The expenses paid will be on the same basis as those rates currently in operation for officers of council/s/NIHE.

If you are employed outside the local government service, fees and expenses shall be agreed and paid by the council/NIHE requiring the assistance of a Professional Assessor.

## **8. Further Information**

If you require further information on, or assistance with your role as Professional Assessor, contact the Human Resources Department. *do not hesitate to contact the Local Government Staff Commission on (028) 9031 3200 or email: [info@lgsc.org.uk](mailto:info@lgsc.org.uk).*

**Stage 3:**

**Starting the Recruitment Process**

### **Stage 3 – Starting the Recruitment Process**

The third stage starts the recruitment process and considers the application form, how and where to advertise the vacant post and the information which will be sent to applicants.

#### **The Application Form**

The purpose of the application form is to assist the shortlisting panel and it should therefore provide information in a standard format in relation to the agreed criteria for the post. This will be used as part of the objective assessment to select those candidates who will be shortlisted for assessment and/or interview.

Application forms should be kept as simple as possible and it is recommended that they are job specific and directly related to the shortlisting criteria. Candidates should be asked to clearly demonstrate on their application form how their qualifications and experience meet the criteria required for the post.

A standard application form is provided on the local government recruitment portal which can be adapted to reflect the criteria for the job.

A closing date for the receipt of applications must be specified in the advertisement and job details. Councils now normally offer online recruitment but there may be particular posts where application forms can be submitted as a hard copy or by email.

Where applications forms are completed online or by email, applicants should be asked to tick a box or type their name to indicate that the information which they have submitted is correct.

It should be noted that the information requested on online or email applications and on hard copy application forms should be the same.

Assistance in completing the application form must be offered to disabled applicants, and those who are not fluent in English. Application forms should also be made available in alternative formats, on request.

### **Late Applications**

Application forms which arrive after the closing time and date should not be accepted. The onus for ensuring an application form is received in the council offices by the closing date rests with the candidate. This should be clearly stated on the application form or accompanying documentation.

A system should be put in place to record the time and date when application forms are issued and received with a cut-off point at the appropriate closing time. Thereafter late applications should be recorded, and brought to the attention of the shortlisting panel.

## **Recruitment Material**

Recruitment material should be written in gender neutral language and any material which includes photos or other graphics should be examined to ensure that it does not reinforce stereotypes and does promote diversity.

Consideration must also be given to the format of the information sent to applicants, for example, offering online recruitment, making the material available in alternative formats on request, offering assistance to complete the application form or making other reasonable adjustments.

## **Information to Applicants**

All applicants should receive as much information as possible to enable them to consider whether or not to apply for a post, and to apply for the job in an effective way.

The information sent to applicants should include:

- the job description
- the person specification

- the shortlisting criteria
- the application form
- guidance notes on how to complete the application form
- the equal opportunities policy
- the monitoring questionnaire and explanatory notes (refer to **Annex 11 10**)
- the terms and conditions of employment
- the recruitment and selection timetable

For more senior posts, councils may also wish to include:

- background information about the council which may include the corporate plan and the political composition of the council. It may also be useful to provide information on the local area
- a contact name with whom the applicant may discuss the post and council in greater detail (the named individual should not be involved in the appointment decision at any stage)

The same information should be made available to all applicants in order to ensure that everyone is treated consistently and fairly. A system should be put in place to ensure that all information can be made available in alternative formats, on request.

## **Reimbursement of Recruitment Expenses**

As most posts are now advertised on the internet, it is advisable for councils to have a policy on the reimbursement of recruitment expenses for applicants applying from outside Northern Ireland in order to avoid any misunderstanding. The policy should take into account the council's equality obligations and should be made available to applicants before they incur any expenses, for example, as part of the application pack.

The policy should include:

- what grade of posts are covered
- from what location expenses will be reimbursed
- what expenses will be paid, for example, travel, accommodation and/or meals
- how these should be booked, for example, by the individual with approval from the council, or by the council
- when the expenses will be reimbursed
- what will happen if the individual turns down a job offer



## **Advertising**

The way in which a council advertises a vacancy plays a significant part in determining the range of applicants attracted. In order to attract a diverse range of applicants, and to provide equality of opportunity, all advertisements should include an equality statement. Where appropriate, advertisements targeted at members of an under-represented group can be used as part of an agreed affirmative action programme.

The selection criteria must be sent to applicants as part of the application pack and may also be published on the council's website. The recruitment documentation should make it clear that applications are welcome from all, and that selection will be made on merit.

## **Recruitment Consultancy**

~~The Commission recognises that~~ It is recognised that there may be occasions when a council may wish to outsource the role of human resources in the recruitment and selection process. In such cases, the spirit and intent of all provisions of this code should be fully implemented by the outsourced consultancy and quality assured by the council.

## **Executive Search Consultants**

To attract applicants who may not normally respond to an advertisement, executive search consultants may be used in addition to publicly advertising, ~~subject to the prior approval of the Commission.~~

Applicants identified by executive search consultants must complete the same application form and be treated in the same way as other applicants who respond to the advertisement for the post and should be subject to exactly the same subsequent selection process.

No additional weight should be given to a candidate's application for a post on the grounds that he/she applied as a result of being contacted by an executive search consultant.

## **Equality Principles**

Councils should satisfy themselves that any recruitment or executive search consultancy they intend to use complies with the legislative provisions and follows the recommendations laid down in the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and other Guidance documents. The recruitment or executive search consultancy register should be operated in a manner consistent with the principles of equality of opportunity.

## **Using Job Centres**

Where a council wishes to use the service of Job Centres, the following recruitment material should be sent for distribution online and at their local offices:

- the job description
- the person specification
- the shortlisting criteria
- the application form
- guidance notes on completing the application form
- the equal opportunities policy
- the monitoring questionnaire and explanatory notes
- the terms and conditions of employment
- the recruitment and selection timetable

This will ensure that “all candidates are given the same chance to demonstrate their abilities or potential abilities and that differential standards are not applied” (Fair Employment Code of Practice, para 5.3.6)

### **Speculative Applications and CVs**

Application forms must be issued only in respect of specifically advertised vacancies. Speculative applications and cvs must not be considered and should be replied to stating the council’s policy on receipt of applications.

## Model Equal Opportunity Monitoring Questionnaire

### Explanatory Notes

..... Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity. It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital status or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, religious belief, political opinion, disability, age, race, nationality, sexual orientation, trade union membership or non membership or criminal record.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively. As an equal opportunities employer, we want to ensure that all of our applicants and employees enjoy equality of opportunity. We also want to encourage the best people to apply for vacancies in our council regardless of their background.

The information provided on the monitoring questionnaire will only be made available to the Council's monitoring officer and will remain confidential except in the event of a tribunal complaint.

If we make equal opportunities information public, this will be done in a way that ensures that individuals are not identified.

To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire will be given an identifying number and only the Council's Monitoring Officer will be able to match this number with your name. Your name should not be written on the questionnaire.

This questionnaire has been agreed with, and has the support of, the recognised trade unions and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The monitoring information collected will be used to:

- provide us with information on the profile of individuals applying to the Council for jobs
- measure the effectiveness of our equal opportunity policy
- determine the extent to which we promote equality of opportunity and fair participation
- assist us to develop and review positive/affirmative action policies.

**If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire, please contact .....**

**Monitoring Information**

Regardless of whether we practise religion, most of us in Northern Ireland are seen as either Roman Catholic or Protestant.

**Please indicate your community background by ticking the appropriate box below:**

Protestant community

Roman Catholic community

Neither the Protestant nor  
Roman Catholic community

If you do not complete the above question, we are encouraged to use the “residuary” method which means that we can make a determination on the basis of personal information on file/application form.

**Please indicate your gender by ticking the appropriate box below:**

Female

Male

**My date of birth is:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Are you married/in a civil partnership?**

Yes  No

**Do you look after, or have responsibility for:**

- Your children
- Other relatives
- Other
- No caring responsibilities

**Under the Disability Discrimination (NI) Act 1995 a disabled person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Please note that it is the effect of the impairment, without treatment, which determines if an individual meets this definition of disability.**

**Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?**

- Yes  No

**If yes, please state the type of disability:**

- Physical Disability
- Mental Health Disability
- Learning Disability



**How would you describe your ethnic group?**

Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic group:	
Chinese		_____	
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>		

My nationality is, eg British, Irish, Portuguese, Polish, Latvian, German

Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have a religious belief? If yes is it:**

Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**My sexual orientation is:**

Hetrosexual (straight)

Homosexual (gay/lesbian)

Bisexual

Other

I do not wish to answer this question

**My political opinion is:**

Unionist generally

Nationalist generally

Other

I do not wish to answer this question

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

**Stage 4:**

**Shortlisting**

## **Stage 4 – Shortlisting**

The fourth stage of the recruitment process includes agreeing the shortlisting criteria and shortlisting the applicants.

### **Composition of the Shortlisting Panel**

Shortlisting and interview panels, as far as is reasonably practicable, should consist of both men and women and be representative of both main communities within Northern Ireland.

The Commission appreciates that, in order to fulfil the duty to reflect the gender and community representation, or a council's wish to include under-represented groups or people with disabilities, it may be necessary for the council to seek the approval of the ~~Commission~~ Chief Executive to amend the composition of the panel as he/she has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Code (see page C:3).

### **Confidentiality**

Panel members should be reminded by the chairperson that they should not discuss the applicants outside the panel meetings, and that all information on candidates should remain confidential.

### **The Shortlisting Meeting**

It is essential that the procedures used to select candidates for interview should not be unlawfully discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, and all applicants must be treated consistently.

Shortlisting should be carried out as soon as possible after the closing date for receipt of applications.

The panel should have agreed the shortlisting criteria, based on the requirements of the person specification, at the preliminary meeting of the panel. Where no preliminary meeting of the panel has taken place, the shortlisting criteria must be agreed before any of the panel members have had sight of the application forms.

It is important to note that no new or enhanced criteria should be introduced at the shortlisting stage which have not been included on the person specification for the post. For example, the panel should not increase the number of years' experience which applicants are required to have, as this could discriminate against younger workers who may not have the opportunity to obtain more experience.

## The Shortlisting Process

The shortlisting panel will first consider the applications against the criteria defined at the preliminary meeting of the panel.

Those participating in the shortlisting should be provided with a full set of application forms, or a summary sheet related to the agreed criteria, together with the selection criteria and job description.

The chairperson must ensure that all applications are considered only against the agreed criteria and that decisions are reached only on the basis of information contained in the application forms. All candidates who meet the shortlisting criteria should be invited to proceed to the next stage of the recruitment process.

The panel may decide to shortlist only applicants who meet both the essential and desirable criteria, or only those who meet the essential criteria. Where desirable criteria are used, these must have been agreed by the panel before the interview took place and before they have had sight of the application forms.

Where an unmanageable number of candidates meet both the essential and desirable criteria, the panel may wish to use some additional method to shortlist further, for example, [a situational judgement test, an assessment centre or a preliminary interview.](#)

Where two or more candidates have applied for a vacancy on a job share basis, their applications should be considered separately in relation to the criteria for the post, in the same way as other applicants.

## **Assessment Arrangements**

Depending on the person specification for the post, the shortlisting panel may agree to use:

- a professionally managed assessment centre
- a situational judgement test
- selection tests
- a preliminary interview

to provide relevant competency based information on each shortlisted candidate.

The results may be used for a further shortlisting before the final candidates are invited to interview (refer to Stage 6 - Assessment Arrangements).

## **Re-advertise**

The shortlisting panel can decide to re-advertise the post if the applicants do not meet the shortlisting criteria.

## **Recording Decisions**

It is important that the decision of the panel regarding whether or not each applicant has been shortlisted, and the reasons for the decision, are clearly documented, and that each panel member signs the documentation. It is acceptable to complete one record sheet on behalf of the panel but this must be signed by all the panel members. A sample matrix for recording the outcome of a shortlisting panel meeting is included in **Annex 12-11**.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

When inviting candidates to an assessment exercise or interview, councils are advised to ask if candidates have any special requirements so that adequate preparations can be made for any reasonable adjustments to facilitate the arrangements for candidates with a disability.

## **Errors in Shortlisting**

When the shortlisting is complete, the panel should check that no errors have been made in including or excluding candidates.



If the panel discovers an error in the shortlisting process, the recruitment procedure should be halted to establish the reason for the error and, if it is established that a mistake was made, this should be rectified. For example, if a candidate who met the criteria has been excluded at the shortlisting stage, he/she should be invited to assessment/interview.

When time permits, a special meeting of the shortlisting panel should be convened to discuss the error and remedial action. If remedial action is not possible, or if a number of errors, or an irregularity is identified, the recruitment process should be abandoned and started afresh.

### **The Role of the Professional Assessor**

The Professional Assessor may participate fully in the discussion of candidates but does not have voting rights. The panel should ask the professional assessor to comment on the professional and technical competence of each applicant but he/she should be advised not to assign a 'mark' to each candidate, or lead the panel in any way.

Generally the Professional Assessor's primary role is to advise on the appointability of applicants at the interview stage but for some technical posts, it may be useful to have his/her advice at the shortlisting stage.

Shortlisting Criteria for the Post of \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5	Shortlisted Yes/No

Signed by Panel Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stage 5**

### **Assessment Arrangements**

## **Stage 5 – Assessment Arrangements**

The fifth stage in the recruitment and selection process is the assessment arrangement. This section provides guidance on type of tests or assessment exercises and considerations for their use.

### **Tests and Assessment Exercises**

Councils are making increasing use of assessment centres and selection tests as an integral stage in the recruitment process, in order to assess the candidates against the key competencies for the post.

It is recommended that tests should assess the actual or inherent ability to do the tasks required in the job and they should be assessed as having no discriminatory impact in terms of the various equality categories. The tests should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still relevant to the duties of the post.

Councils should not devise assessment tests internally, unless the officer designing, administering and evaluating such tests has been fully trained to do so and the tests have been equality proofed.

Reasonable adjustments should be offered to candidates with a disability and, if necessary, councils should consult with the candidate in relation to how best to facilitate their participation in the assessment exercise.

## **Situational Judgement Tests**

Situational judgment tests are designed to assess an applicant's judgment regarding situations they will typically experience in the work place. Job applicants are presented with a range of scenarios and for each a list of plausible courses of action. They are then asked to indicate for each scenario what the best options are or to rank the options from most to least effective. Responses are then scored against a pre-determined key which is developed based on the views of people knowledgeable about the position e.g. supervisors or current employees.

A bank of situational judgement tests has been developed for local government jobs. However these tests should only be used by someone who has been trained to administer and mark tests, and interpret the test results.

Further information is available from your Human Resources Department or from the test developer, Tailored Testing via [info@tailoredtesting.com](mailto:info@tailoredtesting.com) or [sm.mccrory@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:sm.mccrory@ulster.ac.uk).

## **Results of Assessment Exercises**

Assessment exercises provide the shortlisting and selection panels with additional information on candidates.

It is important that the panel decides how the results of the assessment exercises will be used in the recruitment process, before candidates are invited to an assessment arrangement, for example:

- The results may be used for a further shortlisting stage before the final candidates are invited to interview.

- In some recruitment exercises where the assessment exercise is based on the competencies for the post, a mark may be awarded to candidates on the interview assessment sheet based on their performance in the assessment exercises. These marks should be agreed in advance with the assessment centre provider.
- On other occasions, particularly when the assessment exercise is used to shortlist candidates, the assessment report will be used only to inform the panel and no marks will be awarded at interview based on performance on the assessment exercises.

### **Practical Arrangements**

Councils must ensure that an environment is created for participants which is conducive to the assessment exercise. Arrangements should be made to ensure the assessment exercises are conducted in an area which is:

- free from visual images which may be offensive to any individual or group of people or may make some candidates feel uncomfortable
- accessible to disabled candidates
- free from interruptions, noises or distractions, for example, the use of mobile phones or intercoms

## **Feedback on Assessment Exercises**

All candidates who participate in an assessment test or centre should be offered feedback on their performance.

## **Presentations**

Where candidates are asked to make a presentation to the selection panel, this should be assessed on a number of factors, for example:

- structure
- content
- communication skills
- use of examples
- knowledge

Depending on the duties of the post, some factors will be more important than others, for example, for a post where the postholder is required to make a lot of presentations, presentation skills may be weighted more highly than the content of the presentation. The panel should use an assessment form for the presentation and agree the weighting in advance.

**Stage 6:**

**The Interview**



## **Stage 6 – The Interview**

The sixth stage in the recruitment and selection process is the interview. This section gives guidance on the arrangements for the interview, how to conduct the interview and selecting the best candidate.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Selection Interview**

The purpose of the interview is to identify the most appropriate person for the job. This is achieved by measuring the candidates against the key competencies and determining which candidate best meets these, and also meets an acceptable standard.

The objectives of the interview panel include:

- to determine the ability of each candidate to do the job in question
- to appoint the best person for the job
- to represent the organisation in a positive way
- to discuss details of the particular job applied for with each candidate.

## **Before the Interview**

### **Training for Panel Members**

All panel members should be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the content of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents.

The objective of the training should be that those involved in the recruitment process should be able to effectively apply selection procedures which are objective, structured, standardised and job-related and which take account of the principle of equality of opportunity for all.

Training programmes should be updated at regular intervals and refresher training for individuals should be undertaken at least every three years.

In addition, the person chairing the panel should receive guidance from the human resources section on the role and responsibilities of chairing a selection panel.

## Arrangements for Interview

The interview panel need to:

- be familiar with the selection criteria
  
- ensure that the interview schedule allows time for panel members to read over and be familiar with the application forms of shortlisted candidates in order to:
  - minimise mistakes in assessment and selection
  - establish rapport during the interview
  - avoid constant referral to the application form during the interview
  - help determine those areas in which probing questions may be asked
  - ensure that there is a conducive interview environment

Arrangements should be made to ensure that the interview room and waiting area are:

- free from visual images which may act as a “chill factor” to any individual or group of people, or may make some candidates feel uncomfortable
  
- accessible to disabled candidates

- free from interruptions, noises or distractions, for example, mobile phones or intercoms

As far as possible, all interviews should be held on the same day. If this is not practicable, the interviews should be held over as short a period of days as possible.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all candidates should be seen by the same interview panel and, where appropriate, the same Professional Assessor ~~and Commission Observer~~.

### **Structured Approach to Interviews**

The panel should meet in advance of the first interview to review the arrangements. The interview panel must agree the following:

- the format of the interviews
- the questions and evidence required in the answers
- the method of assessing each candidate

If any test or assessment centre arrangement has been conducted, a decision must be taken as to how the results will inform the process.

## **Format and Structure of the Interview**

A standard, consistent and comprehensive interview structure should be used for interviewing each candidate. The panel should maintain the same order of questioning for each candidate. Each candidate should be asked the same question(s) by the same panel member(s).

## **Determining the Questions**

Questions should relate to the job description and person specification and be designed to test the candidates' competence.

Where specific experience has been determined as a competence, questions should be designed to probe for evidence that the candidate could apply this experience to the new post, and has learned from his/her experience in other similar posts.

The core questions should be discussed and allocated, either to each of the panel members, the chairperson or to the Professional Assessor.

A Professional Assessor may assist in devising core questions and should prepare information on the evidence required in the answers for panel members. The panel may prefer the Professional Assessor to put the core questions to the candidates.

To ensure fair treatment, identified core questions must be asked of all candidates and these questions must relate to the competencies for the job.

Panel members should be given the opportunity to ask supplementary questions to clarify or expand on candidates' answers to the core questions and to facilitate interaction between the panel and the candidates. Panel members must take care to avoid supplementary questions which could be construed as discriminatory, for example, questions about racial group, religious or political views, disability, marriage plans, marital status, intention to start a family, children or other caring responsibilities. For example, a woman should not be asked whether she can make arrangements for looking after her children.

Panel members should only ask about a candidate's disability in the context of making a reasonable adjustment to allow him/her to carry out the duties of the post. The panel should concentrate on the person's ability to do the job, after a reasonable adjustment, if necessary.

Towards the end of the interview, the candidate should be given the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the post.

Although all candidates should be allocated the same amount of time for their interview, it is recognised that not all candidates will use the same amount of time. It is essential to allow sufficient time in the interview timetable to allow for discussion and the completion of the interview assessment forms. It is not acceptable to keep candidates waiting for long periods of time due to delays caused by failure to allow sufficient time for conducting the process.

## **Conducting the Interview**

### **Questioning Techniques**

In putting questions to candidates during the interview, panel members should:

- gather evidence through competence-based questions, which are open in nature and encourage the candidates to talk about their experience
- take care not to ask questions which are too complex, have a wide scope of response, are ambiguous in nature, or contain jargon which may only be understood by those working in local government or in the organisation already

- ask for examples from the candidate's previous experience as this allows the panel to obtain more precise information in relation to the competencies. It is important that the information obtained covers not only the experience and skills the candidate has employed in the past, but it should also enable the interviewer to assess the quality of those abilities and how they might be used in the future
  
- clarify points made by the candidate, and probe to gain a better understanding. This is an effective way of eliciting further information about the candidate. If an open question is asked, move from broad, general questions to more specific ones. This can then be followed by more probing questions which begin with:
  - what?
  - why?
  - when?
  - where?
  - how?

in order to clarify and elucidate the example or illustration under consideration

### **Communicating with the Candidate**

The panel should aim to establish an initial rapport with the candidate. The chairperson could begin the interview by:

- introducing members of the interview panel



- explaining the objectives of the interview
- encouraging the candidate to answer all questions as fully as possible
- outlining the agenda for the interview
- informing the candidate that they will be an opportunity at the end to ask questions
- informing the candidate that the panel will be making notes during the interview which will be used for assessing the candidate

Candidates need to see that panel members are interested in them so regular eye contact should be kept with the candidate as well as the panel members' notes. Panel members should exhibit "listening" body language.

It may be useful to give a copy of the core questions to the candidates for him/her to follow while each question is being asked in turn, particularly if the questions are long or complex.

The practice of giving the candidates the core questions for a specified time in advance of the interview in order to allow them to prepare their answers is not recommended. However if councils wish to follow this practice, it should be managed carefully and all candidates should be treated equally in order to avoid one or more candidates being given additional time to prepare.

## **Interview Documentation**

### **Note Taking**

It is essential that panel members take notes during interviews and the chair of the selection panel will advise applicants that members will be doing so.

The main purpose of notes is to remind panel members of the evidence presented by the candidates, so that marks can be given against the competencies required for the post. Each panel member makes an individual assessment of the candidates against the competencies so must take his/her notes. It is not acceptable to take no notes.

Panel members should write actual evidence, or extracts from what was actually said, and could use bullet points and abbreviations. Panel members may also note key points not mentioned by candidates. Single word impressions such as “good”, “average” or “poor” may be difficult to justify afterwards, if challenged.

## **Interview Assessment Form**

An assessment form should be designed for each recruitment exercise. For example in competency-based recruitment, the panel award marks against the competencies, rather than simply marking answers to questions.

Normally each question should be designed to elicit evidence on a key competency. However, on occasion, evidence appropriate to a particular competence may be gained from more than one question, for example, a competence on communication skills could be assessed from the responses to all the interview questions.

The competencies should be weighted to ensure that proper account is taken of their relative importance in the post. One or more competencies could be given a weighting of three and some a weighting of two, while others could remain unweighted.

Marks could be awarded on a five-point scale of evidence, defined as follows:

- 5 Very strong evidence of competence
- 4 Good to strong evidence
- 3 Sufficient evidence
- 2 Some evidence but also some weaknesses
- 1 Little or no evidence

Example: if four marks were awarded to a competence which has a weighting of two, the sub-total for that competence would be  $4 \times 2 = 8$ .

A sample assessment form is included at **Annex 13 12**. This is included for guidance as it is recognised that some councils may wish to modify it to suit their own requirements.

### **Record of the Appointment Process**

All paper work must be retained centrally after the interviews. It becomes “discoverable” in law if a discrimination case is taken and may ultimately be examined at a tribunal. Panel members must not hold on to their own notes.

It is also possible for candidates to use the data protection legislation to obtain copies of notes made on their own interview performance. Panel members should therefore remember that anything they write could be seen by the person sitting in front of them at interview.

## **After the Interviews**

### **Selection of the Most Suitable Candidate**

After all the interviews have been completed, the panel needs to apply effective decision making principles in order to select the most suitable candidate when evaluated against the competencies.

If the marking system has been completed properly, each member of the panel will have a rank order for the candidates who were interviewed. It is on the basis of this rank order that the selection of the most suitable candidate should take place.

### **Reserve Lists**

A recommendation from an interviewing panel may include a list of reserve candidates in order of merit who may be appointed if the successful candidate fails to take up the post.

If another similar vacancy arises within six months of the date of the meeting at which the appointment was made, the post may be offered to candidates from the reserve list in the order of merit.

“Another similar vacancy” is defined as a post with a similar job description and person specification and on the same salary scale. It does not include posts where the similarity relates solely to the salary scale.

Where it is possible that “another similar vacancy” may include similar posts in a different department in the council from the one being advertised, applicants should be made aware of this.

For posts, for example clerical officers, which council advertise regularly because of high staff turnover and for which they normally receive large numbers of applications, it would be reasonable for councils to maintain a reserve list for a 12 month period. Applicants should be made aware, in advance, that the post for which they are applying is subject to a 12 month reserve list.

## Sample Interview Assessment Form

The following is a sample interview assessment which demonstrates how the assessment form can be linked to competencies as set out in the person specification so the panel are aware of the criteria and are marking candidates against it rather than against each other.

This assessment form is a sample only and is designed for a senior level post.

~~The Commission recognises that~~ councils may wish to use an assessment form which is more appropriate to their own needs and this model could be adapted, depending on the key competencies of the post.

## Sample Interview Assessment Form

Competencies	Source of Assessment	Marks Available	Marks Given	Weighting	Sub-Totals
Presentation skills	<b>Presentation</b>	15		<b>1</b>	
(These are given as examples and panel members should be provided with definitions of what is meant by each competency)	<b>Question Numbers</b>				
Leadership	Q 1	5	_____	<b>x 3</b>	_____
Managing in a Political Environment	Q 2	5	_____	<b>x 2</b>	_____
Managing Change	Q 3	5	_____	<b>x 2</b>	_____
Managing People	Q 4	5	_____	<b>x 2</b>	_____
Performance Management	Q 5	5	_____	<b>x 1</b>	_____
Financial Management	Q 6	5	_____	<b>x 1</b>	_____
<b>MARKING KEY: Evidence of Competence</b> 5. Very strong evidence 4. Good to strong evidence 3. Sufficient evidence 2. Some evidence, but also some weaknesses 1. Little or no evidence				<b>TOTAL MARKS</b> <div style="text-align: center;">_____</div>	
<b>Signed</b> _____				<b>RANK ORDER:</b> _____	



**Stage 7**

**Post Interview**

## **Stage 7 – Post Interview**

The seventh and final stage in the recruitment and selection process deals with what happens after the interview, including the retention of records, informing candidates of the panel's decision, providing feedback to candidates and inducting the successful candidate into the organisation.

### **Confidentiality**

In order to maintain confidentiality, all documentation relating to the recruitment exercise should be retained in the human resources section and distributed at panel meetings. At the conclusion of the panel meetings, all documentation should be returned to the human resources section for safe keeping.

The chairperson of the panel should remind panel members that they should not discuss the applicants outside the panel meetings and that all information on applicants should remain confidential. If however, a complaint is received, all documentation relating to the recruitment exercise may be discoverable.

### **Retention of Assessment Forms**

Each panel members' scores should be recorded on a summary sheet and retained for record purposes with their assessment sheets, together with all the other recruitment documentation for a period of at least 12 months by the human resources section.

## **Informing Candidates**

The panel should agree on when the selected candidate should be informed of the decision, either formally or informally. All candidates should be informed promptly after the panel has reached a decision. Where the appointment is conditional on satisfactory references, confirmation of qualifications, a medical examination and/or a child protection check, this should be made clear to the successful candidate.

## **Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates**

Feedback should be offered to all applicants on the reason why they have been unsuccessful, whether at the shortlisting or interview stages of the recruitment process.

If an unsuccessful applicant contacts a member of the recruitment panel requesting feedback, they should be referred to the chairperson of the panel and/or the HR Manager. Care should be taken when providing feedback to ensure that the views of all panel members are represented rather than those of one individual. The comments should be an accurate and unbiased summary of the panel's deliberations in relation to the agreed key competencies for the post and should be based on the recruitment documentation, for example, the interview assessment forms. The panel should discuss and agree the feedback which should be given to applicants who are unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage, and to all candidates at the interview stage.

It may be helpful for the individual giving feedback to use a standardised form, and they should receive training in providing feedback and/or in coaching/mentoring.

The most helpful method of providing feedback to the unsuccessful candidate is a one-to-one meeting or by telephone, since this allows an opportunity for interaction. Where feedback is given verbally, a written record of what was discussed should be retained in the recruitment file.

## **Provision of an Induction Programme**

Having appointed an individual to post, the council has a responsibility to ensure that they are properly introduced to the organisation and the duties to be performed. This period of induction is vitally important and an appropriate induction programme should be put in place.

While the human resources section has overall responsibility to ensure that a proper induction programme is in place, it is the responsibility of the new employee's line manager to ensure that the programme is implemented.

There is a limit to the amount of information which an employee can retain on their first day. A planned, phased induction programme is therefore preferable. Such a programme should include:

- an introduction to the practical workings of the organisation, office and welfare facilities
- an introduction to colleagues and their respective responsibilities
- details of the appraisal process, where applicable
- details of ongoing induction meetings and review arrangements

The new employee should be reminded of the function of the human resources section and encouraged to raise any "settling in" problems in order to avoid future difficulties.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

Any reasonable adjustments should be discussed with the employee and put in place before he/she takes up post. Advice can be sought from specialist disability organisations such as the Employers for Disability or Disability Action.

## **Child Protection Safeguarding**

In line with the council's **child protection safeguarding** policy, staff in posts which will have access to children or **adults who may be at risk of harm** should have completed an Access NI check before taking up post.

## **References**

Councils should provide referees with a copy of the job description and person specification for the post and should ask referees specific questions which seek to elicit information about their experience of an applicant's ability to meet the competencies required for the post.

## **Medicals**

Councils may decide to send the successful candidate for a post to a medical assessment before confirming his/her offer of employment. This should be done in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner.

The Medical Advisor should be given basic information on the requirements of the job and a description of the working environment. The Medical Advisor should be asked to determine his/her ability to carry out the duties of the job, with the aid of reasonable adjustments, if necessary.

The candidate should be given information about the nature of the medical assessment and about how the council will use the information provided by the Medical Advisor.