

# **Code of Practice for Recruitment and Selection**

Last Updated – September 2022

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## Foreword

Schools and their governing bodies have an important responsibility to recruit staff in a fair, professional, efficient and lawful manner. Care should be taken to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all in employment and in the delivery of services. The aim of this code is to provide detailed guidance which will help schools to implement equal opportunities policies in recruitment and selection.

This code is written in line with the [Safer Recruitment Guidelines](#) and within the context of the Equality Act 2010.

Schools wishing to make payments or provide financial assistance to aid the recruitment or retention of teachers must refer to the most up to date [School Teacher's Pay & Conditions Document](#).

## Equality and Diversity

The Council and all schools must ensure that discriminatory practices are identified and removed and that non-discriminatory practices are applied in all areas of employment, including recruitment, training, and promotion. Employers may also have to make a reasonable adjustment if their employment arrangements or premises substantially disadvantage a person with a disability.

It is important that everyone involved in the recruitment and selection process is fully aware of the legal and the financial implications of any breach of the Equality Act. It is strongly recommended that all members of selection panels, including governors, should undergo formal training on equal opportunities selection interviewing. [Safeguarding Bedfordshire offers a free Safer Recruitment online course which schools can access.](#)

Schools and their governing bodies must be committed to and fully accept their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Treat people with dignity and respect and accept people as individuals.
- Understand and address the needs of individuals or groups relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity (including breast feeding), race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Engage with service users, local communities, staff, stakeholders, and contractors to identify and implement improvements.
- Tackle barriers which restrict access to services and employment opportunities.
- Knowing who uses (or should use) different services.
- Ensuring recruitment, selection, training, and promotion processes support them to appoint the best candidate for the role and to develop and maintain the highest standards of skills and expertise.

It is extremely important that the process is carried out in a fair, professional, and lawful manner and that the most suitable candidate is appointed irrespective of any of the below protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

The Protected Characteristics are:

- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Sex
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Sexual Orientation
- Race, ethnicity, or national origin

It is also unlawful to discriminate against someone:

- Because of their own protected characteristic or
- Because they're associated with someone with a protected characteristic (for example, because they care for someone with a disability) or
- Because they have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's complaint

Schools and their governing bodies should also familiarise themselves with the following definitions:

Term	Definition
Direct discrimination	Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because they have a protected characteristic.
Associative discrimination	This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Perceptive discrimination	This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	May occur if certain rules, conditions, or practices apply to everyone, but place a particular disadvantage to those with a protected characteristic, unless these are objectively justified (i.e. if it can be shown that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. Being proportionate means being fair and reasonable, including showing that 'less discriminatory' alternatives have been considered as part of the decision-making process).
Bullying	There is no legal definition to describe bullying however ACAS states that bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient. Bullying may therefore be related to broader aspects of an individual's characteristics and interactions in the workplace. Employers should address bullying in the workplace as part of their duty of care to employees.
Harassment	The legal definition of harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an

	<p>individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual"</p> <p>Unwanted conduct covers a wide range of behaviour, including spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings or other physical behaviour.</p> <p>The word 'unwanted' means essentially the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. 'Unwanted' does not mean that express objection must be made to the conduct before it is deemed to be unwanted. A serious one-off incident can also amount to harassment.</p> <p>Unwanted conduct 'related to' a protected characteristic has a broad meaning in that the conduct does not have to be because of the protected characteristic. It includes the following situations:</p> <p>a) Where conduct is related to the worker's own protected characteristic.</p> <p>b) Where there is any connection with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Regardless of the intended purpose, unwanted conduct will also amount to harassment if it has the effect of creating any of the circumstances defined in paragraph one.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Victimisation occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. The Act also includes a new and additional protection relating to disability.</p>
Discrimination arising from disability	<p>Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the unfavourable treatment cannot be justified.</p>

Unlawful discrimination may happen during the recruitment process where (because of a protected characteristic):

- The employer discriminates against an applicant either in the arrangements they make for deciding whom to offer employment
- In respect of the terms on which they offer a successful applicant employment
- By not offering an applicant employment.

In addition to the equal opportunities' implications, it is vital to take account of appropriate recruitment and selection procedures which will help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children and young people or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. As a result it is highly recommended that you familiarise yourself with the Gov.uk guidance on [Keeping Children safe in education document](#) as well as the [Safer Recruitment Guidelines](#). You should also be familiar with [Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#) which sets out the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applies to all key

local bodies named under section 11(1) of the Act. One of the key features of these arrangements is ensuring safe recruitment procedures are in place.

Schools should have a policy statement outlining their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is expected that ALL staff and volunteers will be provided with this statement as part of their induction process, and it is regularly discussed with them. It should convey that robust recruitment and selection procedures are in place to identify and deter people who might present a risk to children or are otherwise unsuitable for employment. They are to minimise the possibility of children and young people suffering harm from those in a position of trust.

## Section One – Introduction

- 1.1. This code is written in line with any relevant national legislation and is aimed at all individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and is to act as a reference point for all recruiters.
- 1.2. It outlines a comprehensive recruitment procedure and offers advice and guidance on all stages of the selection process. Governing bodies will wish to give careful consideration to the makeup of appointment panels. For the appointment of a head teacher, or a deputy, then governors will be involved but, for other posts (cleaners, school support staff and so on), governors may wish to delegate responsibility to the head and the senior managers within the school. The policy on governor involvement in appointment procedures should be agreed at an early stage so that all parties are clear about the process when a vacancy arises.
- 1.3. It is vital that schools adopt recruitment and selection procedures and other people management processes that help to deter, reject, or identify people who may be a risk to children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.
- 1.4. By adhering to this code, schools within Central Bedfordshire will adopt a consistent approach to the selection of staff and will ensure that all legislation affecting recruitment and selection is complied with at all times.
- 1.5. There is a model recruitment checklist available on the Schools Portal which provides a brief overview of the recruitment and selection procedure and can be used as a checklist for the recruiting manager.

## Section Two – The Recruitment Cycle

- 2.1. The recruitment and selection process is a cycle of inter-connected events. The below process sets out the main events in a sequential order:
  - 1) Vacancy identified – consider if post could be a secondment, job share or an apprenticeship.
  - 2) Review or create job description and write personnel specification.
  - 3) Write and place advert. Send out recruitment pack.
  - 4) Shortlist – Select via interview, tests and undertake any necessary pre-employment checks.
  - 5) Appoint.
  - 6) Induction and ongoing reviews through employee lifecycle.
- 2.2. The recruitment and selection cycle begin once a vacancy occurs. A vacancy can occur due to a number of different reasons some of which are as follows:
  - A new post has been created
  - An employee has recently left and needs to be replaced

- An employee has transferred to another post and needs to be replaced
- There has been an increase in workload
- There is a requirement for new skills
- There has been a structural change.

2.3. When a vacancy occurs due to an employee leaving, the exit interview is often the first stage of the recruitment process and is an ideal opportunity to gather essential information from the post holder that will help you to:

- Decide whether the post is actually needed, needs to be modified, whether there is a need to review working practices or if the duties could be assimilated by other members of staff.
- Review the job description to establish the main characteristics and features of the role.
- Decide whether the post could be a secondment, job-share, or an apprenticeship.

[For full detailed guidance in relation to the Exit Interview process please view the Guidance document found on the Schools Portal.](#)

## Section Three – Job Description

- 3.1. The job description is an essential tool in the recruitment process and needs to be created (brand new roles) or reviewed (existing roles) by the recruiting manager prior to writing the personnel specification and before advertising the post. The creation/review will require taking account of knowledge of the job and information gathered at the exit interview (if applicable). When issued to the successful candidate the job description becomes part of the contract of employment. The job description should include a summary of the main duties and responsibilities of the post. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of duties.
- 3.2. The purpose of a job description is to give a clear and precise definition of what a job involves and how it fits into the school which benefits potential job applicants, the recruiting manager and after appointment, both jobholder and manager.
- 3.3. A job description is the first step towards a fair and objective selection. In order for this to happen a job description needs to:
- Be reviewed whenever a vacancy arises and fully researched and updated on a regular basis; if there appears to be any significant changes this could affect the grade of the role and should therefore be discussed with governors or the appropriate committee of the governing body.
  - Indicate not only the functions and responsibilities but also the relative importance of each element of the job and any foreseeable changes associated with it.
  - Highlight the extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people.
  - Ensure that any responsibilities for Special Educational Needs (SEN) are clearly specified in individual job descriptions.
  - Highlight the individuals' responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children/ young people they are responsible for or comes into contact with. (This



includes where the post holder will work mainly or exclusively with adults. Some of these adults will be parents, grandparents or carers and will have contact with children and young people).

- 3.4. In larger schools the drafting of the job description should also involve the appropriate line manager, e.g. head of department, pastoral head of year or other relevant staff.
- 3.5. If conditions of service are to be featured on the job description, then it is advised to set these out in a foot note. Such a footnote may include, for example, regular trips from home, requirement to undertake shift-rotas, special clothing, equipment to be used, etc., (NB any items in this category must be specific and quantified otherwise unintentional indirect discrimination could occur, e.g. by stating 'heavy lifting involved' which could deter women from applying, always state the weight to be lifted and the frequency of lifting).
- 3.6. [Further guidance and a Job Description template are available.](#)
- 3.7. Central Bedfordshire Council provide [a number of support staff job descriptions for maintained schools on our Schools Portal which have already been evaluated and moderated.](#)

## Section Four – The Personnel Specification

- 4.1. Once the job description has been reviewed a personnel specification should be produced/reviewed in conjunction with the job description. It should be ensured, when doing this, that it does not become merely a description of the previous post holder - this may lead to unintentional stereotyping. The personnel specification should always be produced prior to writing the advertisement so that a brief summary can be included in the advertisement. The personnel specification is an essential recruitment document. Its purpose is to identify the skills and abilities, qualifications, experience etc. which are required in order to successfully carry out the job as specified on the job description.
- 4.2. The personnel specification should be written by the same member of staff (usually the head teacher or designated senior member of staff) who reviewed the job description to maintain consistency of approach. It should be checked by a colleague and/or a member of the interviewing panel and then given to all members of the interviewing panel. In the case of head teachers or principals, the personnel specification will be prepared by the governing body. Schools are advised to refer to the Governments [Staffing & Employment Advice for Schools document](#) for information on statutory requirements relating to recruitment of staff. It is advised that you also refer to the [Safer Recruitment Guidelines](#) on writing a personnel specification.
- 4.3. You must take care to ensure that essential and desirable criteria are not seen as unfair or potentially discriminatory. It is important that the criteria is measurable, quantifiable, non-discriminatory and supported by evidence to allow the panel to assess candidates both at shortlisting and interview stage, on their ability to meet the specifications required for the role. The selection criteria used on the personnel specification should be:

Criteria	Explanation
Realistic	Does the criteria relate directly to the duties to be performed? E.g. not asking for GCSE or 'A' Level Math's when what is actually required is basic numeracy.
Justifiable	Can the job be done without any of the essential criteria? If so, they should not be entered as 'essential'.
Specific and Measurable	How will you be able to tell accurately and objectively (and at which stage in the selection process) whether your criteria have been met? Subjective criteria such as a 'sense of humour' cannot be measured and must not be used.
Weighted	What priority does each preferred criterion take over other criteria?
Agreed	A scoring system against the essential and desirable criteria must be agreed by the interviewing and shortlisting panel.

[Further guidance in relation to essential and desirable criteria is available.](#)

- 4.4. The personnel specification will support candidates to understand whether they have the relevant skills for the role. It will also provide the selection panel with an objective criteria on which to assess candidates.
- 4.5. [Further guidance and a Personnel Specification template are available.](#) Central Bedfordshire Council also provide a [number of support staff personnel specifications within maintained schools on our Schools Portal](#) which have already been evaluated and moderated.
- 4.6. Once completed the personnel specification should be used, in conjunction with the job description, to draw up an advertisement, to serve as a tool for shortlisting and as a checklist for interviews.

## Section Five – Job Evaluation for Support Staff

### NJC Job Evaluation Scheme

- 5.1. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has [published a series of model / generic job descriptions for the current support staff range of posts employed by schools](#). Each of these generic / model job descriptions have been evaluated in accordance with the job evaluation scheme. It is anticipated that this, together with the school's pay policy, will enable most schools to determine the level of posts locally where a best match can be made with the model job description and the personnel specification.

- 5.2. The posts of school support staff have been evaluated to determine which of the four levels is appropriate. The level of post, together with the type of school (i.e. mainstream or special) will determine the range of scale points available from which the governors will select the incremental point for each post.
- 5.3. The key document in analysing a job will be the Job Description Questionnaire. The job description questionnaire will outline the duties and responsibilities of the job, the knowledge, and skills to carry it out and the demands placed on the jobholder.
- 5.4. Where a school identifies a new or an existing post is significantly different from the model / generic job profile, then these posts will be evaluated on an individual basis in accordance with the scheme. Schools should contact their HR/Payroll provider for assistance with the task of completing the job profile. [Further guidance in relation to the Job Evaluation and Moderation process is available.](#)
- 5.5. On completion of the job evaluation and moderation process, where a salary scale is increased then, provided the current spinal column point of the member of staff remains within the spinal column point range for the level and band of the role, there will be no change of salary until the next increment is due. If, however, the change means the current salary is no longer within the scale point range for that level and band, then the salary must be paid at least at the minimum point. A salary points once achieved will be protected so long as the individual remains in post (or for three years whichever period is the shorter). Changes to the scale should only be considered by governors as part of the annual pay review but can be agreed at other times in the year. [The current NJC salary structure for support staff can be found in the finance section of the Schools Portal.](#)

### **Starting Salaries**

- 5.6. Staff are normally appointed to the minimum point on the appropriate grade, although this is at the discretion of the Governing body. It may be appropriate to appoint to a spinal column point other than the minimum where, for example, an employee had previously been paid on the same scale at a higher point and had a break in service of less than one year. The starting salary could fall at any point within spinal column point range identified for the post but, if it is near to the top of the scale, there is less opportunity to progress.
- 5.7. It should also be noted that, the current salary arrangements mean that staff formerly employed as manual workers will be on an incremental scale and, therefore, able to progress on an annual basis. In the past, such staff have been paid on the basis of spot salaries.

### **The HAY Job Evaluation Scheme**

- 5.8. For posts at a Level 4+ (Band E) the HAY job evaluation scheme will be used. Where a new role is identified or there have been significant changes to a post schools should contact their HR/Payroll provider for assistance with the task of evaluation. [Further guidance in relation to the Job Evaluation and Moderation process is available.](#)

## Section Six – Preparing to Recruit

- 6.1. Before starting the advertisement process, you should consider whether the below options are suitable (if yes this must be stated within the advertisement):
- 1) **Job-Shared:** Can the post be job-shared?  
All vacant full-time posts should be assessed to see whether they are suitable for job-sharers. All posts are potentially open to job-share and should be advertised as such unless it is clear the job-share would not work. For more information on job-share [please refer to the Job Share Guidance document](#).
  - 2) **Redeployment:** Is there an opportunity for an individual who is currently at risk of redundancy to [be considered via redeployment](#)?  
Where possible, the redeployment process helps to redeploy employees facing redundancy into suitable alternative roles. As a result, it is advised that recruiting managers liaise with other schools in their area to see if there are any suitable redeployee's available.
  - 3) **Development:** Could this be an opportunity for an individual to develop in an apprenticeship?
  - 4) **Secondment:** Where a vacancy is time limited, e.g. due to maternity leave, long term absence, funding limits or project length offering a secondment may be an effective way of filling the job.
- 6.2. It is important that the selection panel is decided before advertising. By doing so it will allow the panel members to book time out of their diaries and plan, in advance, for the date(s) interviews and whether any additional selection methods will be held. It is strongly recommended that head teachers, senior staff and appropriate governors undertake training with regard to recruitment and selection, particularly in the context of the equal opportunities and safeguarding children's implications of staff appointments. Ideally, the selection panel should be consistent and available to see the entire process through unless there are justifiable reasons for it to change (e.g. change of line manager for the vacancy). No one should be involved in shortlisting or interviewing if they are related to an applicant or candidate. Whenever possible, panels should be as diverse as possible in relation to the protected characteristics.

### Additional selection methods

- 6.3. As part of the preparing to recruit stage, the selection panel will need to determine whether any additional selection methods are required. The interview tends to be the most common method of selecting staff. Alternative methods, such as the use of assessment centres (where trained psychologists test candidates) can be costly. However, group discussions, presentations, warmer style interviews and tests can be used in addition to the interview to make the selection process more objective and relevant. As part of the preparing to recruit stage the selection panel should consider whether any of the following additional selection methods would be suitable:

#### Group Discussions

Group discussions can be used to assess the candidates in:

- i. Logical formulation of argument
- ii. How they relate to other members of the group
- iii. Experience and knowledge of a topic

It is normal practice to inform the candidates to expect a group discussion beforehand and if so, consideration needs to be given as to when to introduce the topic, e.g. do you write and let them know or introduce the topic when all the candidates are assembled ready for the group discussion. The discussion must be relevant to the post and the assessors must be quite clear what they are looking for to ensure standardisation of marking.

### **Warner Style Interviews**

The purpose of the Warner Style Interview is to explore each candidate's motives for working with children, their emotional resilience, and their capacity to form and maintain appropriate professional relationships and clear boundaries.

By their nature, Warner Style interviews touch on matters that are very personal to each candidate. The questions must be agreed and asked by someone who has had appropriate training in Safer Recruitment. If considering use of Warner Style Interviews, it is advised that you contact the schools designated Safeguarding Officer for further information.

This type of interview would only be used for posts requiring the post holder to work with highly vulnerable children, e.g. Looked After children, children with disabilities, or posts where staff will have sole care of responsibility for a child/group of children, e.g. staff taking children on residential trips.

### **Presentations**

If presentation skills are a large or important part of a particular job, then a presentation could form part of the selection process. The topic of the presentation should be sent to all shortlisted candidates allowing them enough time to prepare.

The assessors should have agreed criteria by which to evaluate the presentation. The presentation could be before, during, or after the interview, whichever best fits the timetable.

### **Test**

Tests can be used in addition to selection interviews in order to assess the skills of candidates. Care needs to be taken to ensure that fairness and consistency are achieved. You should ensure that:

- Candidates are informed in advance if they are expected to take a test
- Where typing tests are given, time should be allowed for candidates to familiarize themselves with the equipment, and suitable conditions should be provided.
- Instructions should be standardised so that each candidate receives the same information in the same format (although clearly candidates with a disability, e.g. hearing or sight impairment, may require different instructions or instructions in a different format)

- Tests are closely linked to the job and must aim to predict the future performance in the job and help to assess the candidate in comparison with the personnel specification
- Language proficiency (e.g. in Bengali, Urdu, French, Spanish etc.) is tested during the interview under the supervision of an appropriate interviewer proficient in the language concerned
- Tests are checked carefully to ensure that they will not place internal candidates at an unfair advantage
- Advice is sought on new tests that are devised in-house as these can be subject to unfair racial or sexual bias
- Psychological, psychometric and intelligence tests prepared by external consultants are always administered by specifically trained people and should never be used by unqualified individuals.

Prior to the writing of an advertisement, you should consider:

**The timetable of the selection process:** Careful consideration needs to be given to the timetabling of the recruitment process. The advertisement should be placed with a closing date that enables panel members to liaise and shortlist fairly promptly. The timetable of the following events needs to be considered by and agreed with the panel members:

Selection Process Stage	Recommended Timespan
Closing date	Within 2 to 3 weeks from the date of publication
Shortlisting completed	Within 2 weeks of closing date
Interviews	Within 3 weeks of shortlisting

## Section Seven – The Advertisement

- 7.1. A good advertisement should be a compilation of the key points of the personnel specification and the job description. It is the first stage of the recruitment process that is shown to the public and is therefore projecting an image of the school. The advertisement also forms part of the contract of employment, and it should always contain accurate information. Any inaccuracies in the advertisement (e.g. the wrong salary) should be corrected at the interview or, providing a verbal offer has not already been accepted based on inaccurate information, they should be corrected when the offer letter and terms are issued. Further guidance in relation to this should be sought from the HR/Payroll Provider.
- 7.2. For more detailed guidance and information in relation to advertising please view the [Guidelines on Advertising](#) found on the Schools Portal under Chapter 2: Recruitment & Selection of the Schools Personnel Handbook.

## Section Eight – The Recruitment Pack

- 8.1. The recruitment pack reflects the image of the school and should not contain poor photocopies or sheets with different formats. Where possible schools should provide the recruitment pack electronically.

- 8.2. All information given to interested candidates should highlight the importance of the rigorous selection processes and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It should be clear that proof of identity will be required, as well as a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check where appropriate. Only once a candidate has been shortlisted for interview will they be asked to complete a DBS declaration.
- 8.3. A recruitment pack should be compiled for each vacancy and sent out to every applicant. The type of information to be sent out will vary according to the nature of the post.

However, all packs should include:

- Job description & personnel specification
- Application form and any explanatory notes about completing the form
- [The equal opportunities statement](#)
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy statement
- Any relevant background information about the school and the recruitment process
- Relevant terms relating to the post

You may also wish to include the following:

- Departmental school structure
  - A proposed timetable of events
  - Map of locations and communications
  - Details about the county of Bedfordshire
  - An expenses form and details of subsistence allowances (if applicable)
  - Details of relocation expenses as appropriate
- 8.4. There is no complete definitive pack to send out for every vacancy. You will have to gauge the post against the type of applicant to decide what is best to send out and at what stage of the process.

## Section Nine – The Application Form

- 9.1. According to the Safer Recruitment Guidelines employers should use an application form to obtain a common set of core data. It is not good practice to accept curriculum vitae in place of an application form because this will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. [CBC has produced template application and equal opportunities monitoring forms to assist schools with the application stage of the recruitment process which can be accessed on the Schools Portal](#). It is recommended that all maintained schools use the application form and the equalities monitoring form produced by Central Bedfordshire Council as they meet the legal requirements.

The application form/information pack should refer to the school's commitment to safeguarding children and state that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

## Section Ten – The Shortlisting Procedure

10.1. All applicant information must be treated confidentially and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Shortlisting is one of the most vital stages of the recruitment process and one which is particularly susceptible to poor judgement unless carefully and professionally handled. The equal opportunities monitoring forms need to be removed and kept separately within the school until an appointment has been made.

10.2. Shortlisting should only take place after the advertisement has closed. On receipt of all application forms after the closing date all members of the panel should receive copies of the forms.

In accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, as part of the shortlisting process schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on shortlisted candidates. It is best practice to ask an appropriate and competent person who is not part of the selection panel to undertake searches and to then share the necessary information with the members of the panel. Further information in relation to this process can be found in the [Guidance for Online Searches for Shortlisted Job Applicants](#) accessed on the Schools Portal.

It is strongly recommended that members of the panel shortlist individually to avoid bias. They should then meet to discuss the results and finalise the agreed shortlist.

10.3. All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure:

- That they are fully and properly completed
- That the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- That gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified.

Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned for completion.

Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the applicant. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to, for example, supply teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

All candidate's application forms should be assessed equally and consistently against the criteria contained in the personnel specification.



- 10.4. The panel must diarise and allow sufficient time to shortlist properly. The costs of poor selection are high and can lead at worst to an employment tribunal, poor morale, problems with existing staff and ultimately the appointed person leaving and the recruitment process starting again. Financial costs are also considerable.
- 10.5. Candidates who do not submit their application form by the closing date do not have an automatic right to be considered and need not be included in the shortlisting procedure. However, if a decision is taken by the shortlisting panel to accept late applications, these should be handled in an identical way.
- 10.6. In larger schools the appropriate head of department or relevant line manager should be involved in the shortlisting procedure.
- 10.7. The purpose of shortlisting is to select those candidates who, as far as can be ascertained from their application forms, match the essential criteria outlined in the personnel specification. If too many candidates meet the essential requirements of the personnel specification the list should be shortened by selecting candidates who also meet the desirable criteria. Any candidates that have declared that they should be considered for a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident Scheme, or the Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme must be selected for interview if they meet the essential criteria for the role.
- 10.8. Shortlisting panels should be as diverse as possible in relation to the protected characteristics.

Using a shortlisting proforma ([a template is available](#)) the shortlisting panel should specify why each applicant was selected or rejected for the interview, keeping a brief written record.

NB: It is essential that the selection criteria remain constant throughout the process. New criteria should not be introduced in order to 'shorten the shortlist'. In extremely rare situations it could be difficult to achieve a manageable shortlist. If so, the selection can be weighted, and the candidates scored against each criterion.

- 10.9. Once the panel has met and a final shortlist has been agreed you will need to send the necessary invitation to interview letters to the shortlisted candidates and send a rejection letter to those candidates who were unsuccessful. This may be via e-mail or letter. Candidates should be notified of the outcome of their applications as quickly as possible and constructive feedback should be provided where requested.

### **The Invite to Interview Letter**

- 10.10. This should include:

- Post title
- Date, time, and location of interview
- Length of interview
- Instructions to ring, email or write and confirm acceptance of interview and provide details of any reasonable adjustments that may be considered to support the

selection process, such as information needs to be provided in a different format e.g. Braille

- Names and job titles of the interviewing panel
- Details of how to get to venue, map, parking arrangements, etc.
- Advance notification of the types of assessment methods if they are to be used in addition to the interview
- Name of the person to contact if there is a query
- Advice on accessibility of the venue
- A request for the candidate to complete a Criminal Record Self Declaration form. This form will only be viewed should the candidate be shortlisted for interview. If shortlisted the candidate must return this form **prior** to the interview.

- 10.11. All interviews should be allocated a specific time and a timetable should be drawn up giving each candidate the same length of interview, with adequate time in between interviews to write up notes. Selected candidates should be given alternative interview dates wherever possible if they are unable to attend on the agreed interview date. However, if this is not possible due to the method of selection, e.g. group discussion, then the arrangements should be made quite clear to all candidates (either in the advertisement or in the information pack).

#### **The Holding Letter (where applicable)**

- 10.12. If you are unable to meet your recruitment timescales, it is advisable to inform the candidates of the current situation and any revised timetable in order to keep their interest.

This communication may be via e-mail or letter and might include:

- A brief outline of the situation
- Telling candidates' a date when they are likely to hear if they will be interviewed or rejected.

#### **Informing Unsuccessful Candidates of the Outcome of the Shortlisting Process**

- 10.13. It is advised that unsuccessful candidates are notified in writing as soon as a decision is reached. (This may be via e-mail or letter). This letter might include:
- A thank you to the applicant applying
  - Comments about the high standards of candidates (if applicable)
  - That they have not met the shortlisting criteria on this occasion
  - That feedback can be provided if requested
  - A wish for future success

## **Shortlisting feedback**

- 10.14. A member of the appointment panel should be designated to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates if required. For further advice please contact your HR/Payroll provider.

Practical steps for giving constructive feedback:

- Make sure it is objective
- Acknowledge positive points as well as offering constructive suggestions for improvement
- Try and give internal candidates feedback face to face
- Welcome feedback from candidates: it may help your future recruitment experiences
- Don't discuss other candidates

## **Shortlisting Candidates with Disabilities**

- 10.15. The Council is proud to be a Disability Confident employer, and should any candidate consider themselves to have a disability they will be offered a guaranteed interview should they meet the minimum/essential criteria for a role. [Further guidance in relation to employing disabled people and people with health conditions has been issued by the Government.](#)

For further advice on equal opportunities please contact your HR/Payroll provider.

## **Shortlisting Candidates in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant**

- 10.16. Central Bedfordshire Council actively supports the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that veterans are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve. It says we will do all we can to ensure they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. Further information in relation to this can be found by clicking here.

Part of the Council's commitment to this cause is to offer guaranteed interviews to veterans if they meet all the essential criteria of the post.

## **Section Eleven – The Interview**

- 11.1. The interview is a two-way communication process where candidates will be deciding whether they want to work for the school, as much as the interviewers are deciding whether the candidates are suitable for the post. The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and personnel specification and explore their suitability to work with children and young people. The selection process for people who will work with children should always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate. Interviews should not be held prior to the closing date of the advertisement or before all applications have been considered for shortlisting.

- 11.2. The interview is similar to the advertisement stage in that any inaccurate information given to the candidate during the interview should be corrected when the written offer is made, otherwise it might form part of their terms and conditions.
- 11.3. The interviewers should be fully familiar with the job description, the personnel specification and the candidates' application forms. Careful consideration needs to be given to the length allocated to each interview. The time will differ according to the complexity/seniority of the job.
- 11.4. Interviewers should never conduct an interview alone as this lays the whole process open to subjectivity and bias. A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview. There is no ideal panel size but it usually ranges from two to six people dependent upon the grade of the post. To have four people interview a clerical assistant is clearly to be avoided as it would probably make the candidates very nervous as well as not being an effective use of resources. One member of the panel should be the same person who revised/created the job description and wrote the personnel specification to maintain consistency.
- 11.5. If informal interviews, or chats/discussions with the candidates, are intended to be part of the selection process they must be objectively assessed, and the candidates informed of this. Failure to do so could put candidates at an unfair advantage (or disadvantage) against others. There is nothing to be gained from an informal interview that cannot be ascertained during the formal interview process. Informal interviews should not be confused with preliminary/sifting interviews. Similarly, showing candidates around the school during their informal visits should not form part of the selection process.
- 11.6. Where a candidate has identified as part of the invite to interview process that they require reasonable adjustments, suitable adjustments must be made, and the adjustments recorded. Reasonable adjustments could be for example providing information in a different format e.g. Braille, allowing a disabled person extra time to complete a test or permitting a disabled person the assistance of a reader or scribe during the test.
- 11.7. Any activities in addition to the interview should have agreed criteria by which the candidates' responses can be judged. Candidates should be informed before the day of the interview of any activities which will occur, and which will be considered as part of the process, e.g. taking part in a lesson. Children and young people can make a valuable contribution to the recruitment process and their participation should be considered for key strategic and managerial posts as well as posts where staff will have a high level of responsibility for children's day to day care.

The following considerations should be taken into account in planning children's involvement:

- Clarification of the role children will take in the process, how their views will be taken into account in selection and what weighting these will be given.

- Preparation and/or training.
- Process for debriefing/feedback.

Involving pupils in the recruitment and selection process in some way and observing short listed candidate's interaction with pupils is common and recognised as good practice.

- 11.8. If there is more than one stage to the recruitment process, then the different stages must be designed together and the selection criteria must be discussed and agreed by the appointing panel. Preferably at least one member of the panel should be present at each stage to maintain consistency and for safeguarding reasons.

**It is imperative that internal and external candidates are treated in exactly the same manner.**

### **The Interview Panel**

- 11.9. The members of the interview panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment
- Meet before the interview to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the personnel specification and to prepare a list of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post and who on the panel will ask which questions.
- Identify any issues they wish to explore with each candidate based on the information provided in their application form and in the reference
- Ensure that at least one of the panel members has an understanding of the [Safer Recruitment Process](#). Governing bodies of maintained schools are required to ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.
- Be aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality
- [Use the candidate assessment form to record responses](#) to interview questions and to support the interview/assessment decision making.
- Ensure that with any candidates for customer facing roles that consideration is given to each applicant's fluency in English and that any judgements made in relation to fluency in English are appropriately noted on the candidate assessment form

- 11.10. The panel should agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post and the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidate's application form and references. [Further guidance in relation to references is available](#). A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how the matter should be followed up. It is better to ask competency-based questions that ask a candidate to relate how he or she has responded to or dealt with an actual situation or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding of issues. By asking the right interview questions you can help to get the most from an interview. Except in particular circumstances, questions

about disability or health must not be asked at the interview stage or at any other stage before the offer of a job (whether conditional or not) has been made, or where the person has been accepted into a pool of candidates to be offered a position when one becomes available. All other questions regarding the candidate's health and previous levels of sickness prior to being offered the job must not be asked, unless it is for the sole purpose of determining whether the applicant could carry out a function essential to the job with 'reasonable adjustments' in place. In these circumstances you must seek advice from your HR/Payroll provider beforehand.

11.11. In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for a post, the interview panel should also explore:

- The candidate's attitude towards children and young people including their motivation to work with children, their ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children
- Their emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviour and attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- Their attitudes to use of authority
- Their ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Gaps or anomalies in the candidates academic or employment history
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or reference
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the [Criminal Record Self Declaration form](#). Candidates shortlisted to interview will have been asked to complete this form and return to the school prior to the interview. Candidates should be given an opportunity to declare anything they feel relevant in light of the need for a DBS check. If the Criminal Record Self Declaration form has not been provided the candidate will need to be made aware of the importance of completing this as soon as possible.

## **Preparation Checklist**

Careful preparation is essential for effective selection interviewing:

- Choose a room for the interview and any accompanying selection exercises which offers comfort and
- privacy and make appropriate seating arrangements. Seating and room layout can be particularly significant when interviewing a disabled candidate. For example, candidates who are lip-reading will find this difficult if the interviewer sits immediately in front of a window as his or her face will be thrown into shadow. If any reasonable adjustments have been brought to the core selection panel's attention any required support is arranged and ensure that the room is accessible. Once the room or room(s) are booked ensure reception is aware so that candidates are expected.
- Ensure that there will be no interruptions and that telephone calls will be redirected for the duration of the interview.

- Areas for questioning should be identified. These should include general questions to be asked of all candidates and specific questions relating to individuals' applications and a chairperson should be appointed.
- It is the responsibility of the chairperson to brief the panel members about what questions are not acceptable and therefore should not be asked.
- Timing of interviews should be carefully planned to allow space between interviews to ensure that notes are made on all candidate's assessment forms and to avoid interviewers becoming fatigued. It is important to try to keep to the planned timetable and so where candidates arrive late for their interview they should still be considered, if possible, but should not disrupt the timetable, forcing candidates who have arrived on time to wait.
- On arrival, there should be somewhere comfortable, and, ideally, private for the candidates to wait. Refreshments such as water, tea or coffee should be provided, and candidates told where the toilets are.

## **Structure**

- 11.12. Interviews should be well structured but not inflexible. A good example of an interview structure is represented by WASP:

W – Welcome

A – Acquire Information

S – Supply Information

P – Plan and part

## **Welcome**

- Greet the candidate and introduce yourself by name and job position. In a panel interview, this should be undertaken by the chairperson, who should then introduce the other panel members in the same way.
- Explain the structure of the interview to the candidate, e.g. whether there will be an opportunity for questions, and give them the necessary information.
- Be aware of first impressions and your own prejudices and avoid making 'snap' decisions.
- If you intend to take notes then explain to the candidate that you are doing so.

## **Acquire information**

- Keep your own talking to a minimum, encouraging the candidate to talk
- Avoid leading, closed and multiple questions and ask questions aimed at the level of job and which the candidate can understand. Use open questions to encourage the candidate to 'open-up'. E.g. 'Tell me about...', 'How do you feel about...'
- Use probing questions to explore inconsistencies and depth of knowledge and experience
- Do not ask questions about personal circumstances, e.g. marital status, children or other dependants, religion, ethnic origin (if not job related), politics, etc. These are

not relevant to a candidate's ability to do the job and many questions of this nature are likely to be unlawful. If discriminatory questions are asked, the chairperson (or another member of the panel) should alert the panel to the fact that the question and any answer should be discounted from the selection process.

- All questions should have one objective which will be to ensure the answer provides information that is relevant to the job description and will help with the assessment of the candidate in relation to the personnel specification.
- Summarise before moving into new areas, restating the candidate's statements to check your understanding of what they have supplied
- Non-verbal behaviour can offer encouragement to the candidate, but beware of conveying the opposite effect

Also acquire any relevant documentation as per the below:

- According to Safer Recruitment and Government procedures candidates are required to bring the following documentation to the interview (if applicable):
  - Evidence of their right to work in the UK and their identity. The Home Office have issued an [Employers' Right to Work Checklist](#) which all employers must comply with.
  - Proof of educational or professional qualifications held that are relevant or necessary for the post. If this is not possible, written confirmation must be obtained from the awarding body. In the case of teachers, qualified teacher status is verifiable through the Department for Education (DfE) and the Teaching Regulation Agency. Details of further qualifications for Teachers', however, will not necessarily be recorded. It may be that references and the interview itself will reveal sufficient evidence that the candidate has undertaken further study. The only positive evidence, however, that the study resulted in the award of a qualification will be the production of a certificate or diploma.
- According to the Government guidance on the application process for criminal records checks overseas those applying for entry clearance to come to the UK under any of the visa routes to undertake certain jobs (such as further, secondary, primary, and special needs education teaching professionals), along with their adult dependents, will be subject to the requirement to produce a criminal record certificate. The certificate must be produced from any country (excluding the UK) in which they have been resident for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the previous 10 years before their application, while aged 18 or over. [To find out if the role you are recruiting for requires this document and for further information, please access the Home Office Guidance.](#)

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personal file.

### **Supply Information**

- Clarify and expand on the job description and school - this gives you an opportunity to communicate the policies, beliefs and working culture of the school.



- Clarify the terms of the job
- Give details on training if applicable

### **Plan and Part**

- Invite questions from the candidate, respond to them, and make a note of the question and response given
- Tell the candidate how and when they will be contacted about the outcome
- Let the candidate know that the identity of the successful candidate will be checked thoroughly and, that where a Disclosure & Barring Service check is appropriate, prior to appointment there will be a requirement to complete an application for a DBS disclosure.
- Part by thanking the candidate for attending and explaining the next steps i.e. any further rounds of interviews / selection tests and timeframes

- 11.13. At the end of the interview ask yourself what information you have obtained that is not on the application form. Have you ascertained whether each candidate meets the personnel specification? [Use the candidate assessment form to map your ideas.](#)

## **Section Twelve – The Appointment**

- 12.1. Members of the interviewing panel should individually complete a candidate assessment form by matching each candidate's application form and interview performance against the requirements of the personnel specification. The panel should then individually assess the candidates using the candidate assessment form, and collectively decide who is successful. The candidate who best meets the requirements should be appointed. If it is difficult to choose between two candidates, then consider inviting them back for a second interview. It is entirely acceptable not to appoint straight away, as selecting the right candidate for the role is essential.

NB: When appointing staff at Faith schools, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, paragraph 60, allows schools to exercise preference in respect of the appointment of staff whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination "specified in relation to the school under Section 69(4)" (of the Act) or who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets or who are willing to give religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets.

If a candidate has a disability, the interviewing panel must score their performance at interview and in any other selection activities in light of any reasonable adjustments the school might make. This means that the selection must be decision based on how the candidate is likely to perform in the role, with a reasonable adjustment in place. Where such information is volunteered, interviewers should explain that such discussions are best left to the job offer stage. This is to ensure that the panel are not influenced by that information. The Equality Act is clear that prior to appointment you only require information on reasonable adjustments that are needed for the interview. Further guidance in relation to employing disabled people and people with health conditions has been issued by the Government and can be found [here](#).

The panel should record precise reasons why all unsuccessful interviewees have been rejected and retain their notes for a period of six months, after which point, they must be destroyed. A member of the appointment panel should be nominated to offer feedback to people wanting to know why they have not been successful. All unsuccessful candidates should be informed verbally (if possible) and in writing. If you wish to hold the second-best candidate until the successful applicant has accepted, it is acceptable to do so providing it is done quickly. Guidance in relation to giving constructive feedback can be found below.

**Practical steps for giving constructive feedback following the interview process:**

- Make sure it is objective
- Acknowledge positive points as well as offering constructive suggestions for improvement
- Try and give internal candidates feedback face to face
- Refer candidates to another interviewer if they have a specialist or technical question that you are not in a position to answer
- Welcome feedback from candidates: it may help your future recruitment experiences
- Don't discuss other candidates

If the panel decides that no candidate is suitable for the job, then all candidates should be rejected, and the post re-advertised. The advertisement should clearly state whether previous candidates need apply.

Where an equal opportunities monitoring form has been received this should be sent to the Headteacher in order for it to be confidentially retained in the schools HR files. [CBC has produced an equal opportunities monitoring form template which can be accessed on the Schools Portal.](#)

- 12.2. Once a decision has been made you should complete the necessary new starter documentation and send this to your HR/Payroll Provider along with the application form, DBS Disclosure form, personnel specification, and the job description.

The below pre-appointment checks must then be completed, and references sent for if not already sought. The offer must be made subject to the below satisfactory clearances and completion of any relevant examinations. Ideally, clearance should be obtained before the successful candidate starts work.

**Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks and References**

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory written references, where possible confirmed by telephone. (One of which must be from the last employer that managed the candidate in a role working with the relevant group) [Further information in relation to employment references is available.](#)
- Verification of the candidate's identity (if not already confirmed at interview)

- A satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosure at the appropriate level as per the School's DBS Policy (unless the DBS Update Services applies). DBS Disclosure clearance is a vital tool to protect children and the vulnerable. Contracts are issued subject to satisfactory clearance, but it is important to conduct a risk assessment if the DBS Disclosure is delayed and it is intended that the successful applicant should start work. [Further information in relation to DBS Disclosure clearances.](#)
- Evidence of right to work in the UK. There are two types of right to work checks that can be carried out: a manual check or an online check. The type of check required will depend on whether the candidate holds digital proof of their immigration status in the UK. It is important that you familiarise yourself with and follow the [Government Guidance on checking a job applicant's right to work documentation](#). The Home Office have also issued an [Employers' Right to Work Checklist](#) which all employers must comply with. Should the candidate have limited permission to work in the UK it is crucial that the school records the end date for follow up when required. Further information in relation to when you should carry out follow up checks can be found within the Government Guidance linked above.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of the candidate's qualifications (if not already confirmed at interview)
- Verification of professional status/registration
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction/ probationary period where appropriate

All checks should be:

- Confirmed in writing
- Documented and retained on the personal file (subject to the restrictions on the retention of information imposed by the DBS Regulations)
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

#### 12.3. In situations where:

- The candidate is found to be on the DfE Children's Barred List or the DBS Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children,
- The candidate has provided false information in, or in support of their DBS application, or
- There are serious concerns about a candidate's suitability to work with children

The facts should be reported to the police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service (if they are not already aware) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Anyone who is barred from work with children is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work which constitutes [Regulated Activity](#) or Work with Children. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to procure work in a regulated position for an individual who is disqualified from working with children or fail to remove such an individual from such work.

[Further guidance in relation to regulated activity can be found within the DBS Policy.](#)

- 12.4. Once all satisfactory clearances and information to enable the contract of employment to be prepared has been received, a start date can be confirmed with the recommended candidate. It is important that the recruiting manager advises the HR/Payroll Provider as soon as possible to enable them to issue the contract of employment prior to the individuals start date. It is a legal requirement that contracts are issued to new starters no later than their first day of employment.
- 12.5. There should be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in a school. Induction will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme should:
- Provide training and information about the schools' policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and child protection (for example, bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention and restraint, internet safeguarding and so on). This training should be at a level appropriate to the member of staffs' role and responsibilities with regard to children
  - Support staff in a manner appropriate to the role for which they have been engaged
  - Confirm the safe practice and standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils within the school
  - Provide new staff with an opportunity to discuss any concerns or issues about their role or responsibilities and advise them how to raise concerns going forward
  - Enable the persons line manager (or mentor) to recognise any concerns or issues about the employee's suitability or ability at the outset and address them immediately.
  - Provide the identity and responsibilities of staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities
  - Provide other relevant procedures (i.e. discipline, capability, whistleblowing etc.).

## Section Thirteen – Record Keeping

- 13.1. Essential recruitment records should be kept allowing the School to justify each decision and the process by which it was reached and to respond to any complaints of discrimination. You may wish to discuss with your HR/Payroll Provider what information they require as part of the new starter process. Any documents received should be securely retained in the school and recorded on the [Schools Single Central Record](#) if necessary.

The records you must keep include:

- Any job advertisement, job description or personnel specification used in the recruitment process
- The application forms or CVs, and any supporting documentation from every candidate applying for the job

- Records of discussions and decisions by an interviewer or members of the selection panel; for example, on marking standards or interview questions
- Notes taken by the interviewer or by each member of the panel during the interviews
- Each interview panel member's marks at each stage of the process; for example, on the application form, any selection tests and each interview question (where a formal marking system is used)
- All correspondence with the candidates.