

Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guidance

Using Recruitment Agencies for Permanent Appointments

General Principles

- All external job vacancies within the council are advertised on the jobs@derbyshire website, and where relevant in external media (newspapers, journals etc.). This:
 - demonstrates to the community and potential employees that the council, as a large employer, has a transparent and open recruitment process.
 - enables the council to select from the widest talent pool, and demonstrates the council's commitment to building a diverse workforce.
- It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances there may be a strong business case for using a Recruitment Agency to identify potential applicants for a permanent or fixed term vacancy.
- All recruitment to Council posts, however the applicants are identified, should be appointments on merit, consistent with the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures, to ensure appointments are made in a robust and fair way.

Recruitment Agency Services

This guidance relates to the services offered by Recruitment Agencies to provide potential applicants for permanent or fixed term vacancies. It is separate from guidance on covering for short term needs via agency staff about which there is guidance elsewhere.

A Recruitment Agency will usually offer to provide the council with high quality suitable applicants. If an applicant introduced by an Agency is subsequently appointed, the Agency will typically charge a percentage introduction fee, usually based on the annual salary for the post being recruited to.

Whilst using an agency may provide a targeted and focused method of identifying suitable candidates, it is a less 'open' and accessible recruitment method than advertising more widely, as it draws from a limited pool of people either registered with the agency or known to them.

Temporary Agency Workers

This guidance does not apply to the procurement of short term temporary agency workers. All requests for temporary agency workers (other than for Business Services which are provided via Resources@Derbyshire) should be routed through

Comensura with whom the council has a contract for the provision of temporary agency staff. Guidance on these matters can be found in a separate section.

Approval to use a Recruitment Agency

Before engaging a Recruitment Agency to help fill a permanent or fixed term vacancy, you must seek approval from your Departmental HR Service Partner. Approval to use a Recruitment Agency is at the discretion of the Departmental HR Service Partner, on a post by post basis, taking all circumstances into account.

Business Case

Use of a recruitment agency may be considered in exceptional circumstances:

- when recruiting to a specific 'hard to fill' post, which requires rare skills or expertise;
- where there is proven to be a severe shortage of suitable candidates;
- where it has been demonstrated that suitable candidates cannot be attracted through the usual methods.
- where the cost of the Agency fees would be less than the costs of advertising

As a minimum, the vacancy should have been previously advertised within the last 3 months:

- on jobs@derbyshire and the accompanying job sheet
- if appropriate, in other external media.

Applicants meeting the selection criteria for the post must have been interviewed, and there must be clear evidence that none of the applicants were appointable.

The advertisement will be reviewed in terms of its style, content and placement, by the HR Service Partner, to confirm that no further action could be taken to increase the number of suitable candidates. The HR Service Partner will need to be satisfied that changes to the advertising or selection process, would not generate more suitable applicants.

Before involving a Recruitment Agency

At the beginning of the process, clearly establish, and agree the introduction fee payable to the Agency and establish a "no appointment of an Agency recommendation – no fee" provision.

Consider using more than one agency as competition is likely to lead to better candidates and cheaper introduction rates.

Calculate the potential value of the contract and ensure that procurement is carried out in line with Council procedures and policies. If the value of the contract is £10,000 or less, three quotes should be obtained and evaluated against clear criteria.

The Agency is responsible for ensuring that any applicants they introduce identify themselves as having been introduced by the agency on their application form under the question 'Where did you learn of this vacancy?'

Recruitment Process

There is one point of contact and one recruitment process for all applicants for council vacancies, whether they first hear about the job through the jobs@derbyshire website, external media or through an Agency.

You should ask the Agency to ensure that all applicants obtain job information and an application form from the jobs@derbyshire website, or Call Derbyshire, and submit their application form through the usual channels.

Where use of a Recruitment Agency has been approved for a specific vacancy, the post must at the same time also be advertised through the HR Shared Service Centre on the jobs@derbyshire website. The same advertised closing date should be applied to all applicants.

To ensure that the best candidate is appointed and selection decisions are robust and defensible:

- Provide the Agency with full information about the vacancy, including the Job and Person Profile to ensure they clearly understand the skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience required.
- The Agency should direct potential applicants to the council website for full information about the vacancy and an application form.
- All applicants must complete a council application form at the point of introduction, and submit it in the usual way to the HR Shared Services Centre. CVs are not normally accepted, as although commonly used by Recruitment Agencies, they may not provide enough information to be able to judge whether the candidate has all the skills, knowledge and experience for the job.
- No decisions should be made about which applicants are to be interviewed, until an application form, including the monitoring section, has been completed.

Review of Recruitment Agency Use

The HR Service Partner is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the use of Recruitment Agencies to recruit permanent or fixed term employees within their Department. Management information provided by the HR Shared Service Centre will be reviewed to ensure cost effectiveness.