

Guidance Notes for Completing an Application Form

Introduction

Sefton Council is committed to equality in recruitment, selection and during the course of employment and positively welcomes applications from all sectors of the community. The purpose of this Guidance is to give those interested in working for the Council assistance in completing the application form, information on the recruitment, selection and appointment process, and to support fairness in access to work.

If you require a copy of the application form and guidance notes in an alternative format such as large print or braille, please contact the Recruitment Team on recruitment@sefton.gov.uk or 0151 934 3213.

Guidance

Your application form plays an important part in all stages of the selection process: it is used to determine whether you will be selected for interview and acts as a basis for the interview itself. Some important points to bear in mind before you complete the form:

- Study the Job Description and Person Specification as they list the qualifications, skills, knowledge, and experience required to do the job.
- Review your own skills, knowledge and experience.
- Ask yourself if you possess the essential attributes and whether you can meet the mental and physical demands of the job before investing time and effort in completing the form.
- Make sure your application clearly shows how you meet each item of the Person Specification which is to be assessed from the application form, use examples where you can.
- Please complete the form; do not send a CV instead (unless the advert clearly states CV's are accepted), as it will **not** be accepted.
- Keep a copy of the advertisement for future reference, it provides useful information about the job and other details such as closing date, return address etc.
- Ensure you complete a separate tailored application form for each role you apply for.

Personal/Contact Details

The contact details you give on this form will be used for all correspondence regarding the post/work for which you have applied, therefore it is vital that you give the most up to date information and complete all relevant fields. Our primary method for contacting you will be by email.

Education, Qualifications and Training

Specify details of all formal and informal qualifications and training that you have obtained, and that are required or appropriate for the job. Please do not use abbreviations; specify the full title of the qualification.

You should also include training that you have acquired as part of a government employment/training scheme or from activities undertaken outside of work if relevant.

If your application is successful you will be asked to provide documentary evidence of all qualifications and grades listed in this section.

Employment History

This section covers your work history, present and past. Please also provide explanations for any gaps in your employment history, i.e. unemployment, training, career break, etc. If you have left school, college or a training programme and have not yet had a full-time or permanent job, please give details of any other employment you may have had such as work experience gained on Government training schemes, holiday work and voluntary work.

Please note that for roles managing or working in a Children's Home you must provide your full employment history, together with an explanation of any gaps in employment on the application form. If you have previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, you must state the reason why the employment or position ended.

Supporting Information

This is the most important part of your application form. It is your opportunity to demonstrate, using examples, how your skills knowledge and experience meet the requirements of the post as described in the person specification. Include **relevant** aspects and achievements in your career history rather than repeating it all. **Aim to be concise.**

You can refer to work experience gained from government employment initiatives and/or draw upon your skills, knowledge and experience gained from other aspects of your life such as community or voluntary work, leisure, school or other responsibilities such as bringing up a family.

Rehabilitation of Offenders/Criminal Records, Convictions and Cautions

Whilst the Authority supports the rehabilitation of ex-offenders it is obliged under certain care/safeguarding legislation and an Exemption Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to ensure safe recruitment to posts where working with children, vulnerable adults or other positions of trust is involved. These are referred to as Regulated Posts. The job description and person specification will indicate under "Special Conditions" if the post you are applying for is Regulated and falls within this legislation. This means you must disclose information about any spent or unspent convictions when applying for these posts except where they are protected convictions and cautions. See * below for more information. All successful applicants to Regulated Posts will be subject to a criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Where a Basic Disclosure is required, the job description and person specification will indicate under "Special Conditions" that the post requires compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). In this instance, you are required to indicate whether you have any unspent convictions or cautions on the Application Form. A criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring service will be undertaken to assess job applicants' suitability for positions that require access to the Government Connect Secure Extranet, i.e. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) systems, etc.

Applicants should be aware that having a conviction or a record of some other type of unacceptable behaviour **would not** necessarily bar you from employment in Regulated Posts and/or posts requiring HMG BPSS clearance as any decision to employ will be considered on the individual circumstances of each case.

The amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provides that when applying for certain jobs and activities, certain spent convictions and cautions are considered 'protected'. This means that they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into

account. Guidance about whether a conviction or caution should be disclosed can be found on the [Ministry of Justice website](#).*

Further information and guidance has been produced by Nacro:

- [Self-disclosure guidance](#)
- [Do I need to disclose flowchart](#)

Nacro can also be contacted for further advice and guidance - www.nacro.org.uk

Sefton Council will not take account of any convictions and cautions, reprimands and warnings we are not legally entitled to know about.

Eligibility to Work in the UK

In order to meet the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, all successful applicants will be required to produce proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK as part of the pre-employment check process.

References

To support the selection decision a reference is sought for shortlisted applicants. You are asked to provide the name and address of two referees, one of which must be your current or most recent employer (external candidates must not use a member of the interview panel as a referee). In most cases only your first referee will be contacted however the recruiting manager reserves the right to contact all referees provided. If you have never worked you should identify a referee who is able to tell us about your skills, knowledge and abilities, e.g. Headteacher, Voluntary Organiser, etc.

Please ensure that you provide an e-mail address for your referees, where possible, as failure to do so may lead to a delay in obtaining a reference.

If the post you are applying for requires DBS clearance then you must provide 2 referees which must cover the past 2 years employment.

If the post you are applying for requires compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) then as a minimum you must provide full details of present and past employment for the last 3 years.

If the post you are applying for is managing or working in a Children's Home then you must provide 2 referees, including your most recent employer, if any (this applies to both internal and external candidates). In addition to the 2 referees, you must also provide contact details for any other previous positions you have worked in which involves work with children or vulnerable adults. The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 require an employer to verify the reason why the employment or position ended.

Personal Relationships

You must disclose whether you are related to any Elected Member or employee of the Council.

Disability Confident Employer

The Council is a Disability Confident Employer which means that it is committed to removing barriers for disabled people and those with long term health conditions in employment. As part of this scheme candidates are able to apply for all non-schools vacancies under a guaranteed interview scheme. In order to apply under this scheme, you must complete the relevant question when submitting your application. Further details can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Care Experienced Employer – Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Council is committed to the employment of care experienced people. As part of this scheme candidates are able to apply for all non-schools vacancies under a guaranteed interview scheme. In order to apply under this scheme, you must complete the relevant question when submitting your application. To be able to access this policy you must have been cared for over a period of 13 weeks (or episodes which add up to 13 weeks) since your 14th birthday and at least one day whilst you were 16 or 17 years old, Or you were cared for, over a short time on or after your 16th birthday. Anyone who is unsure if this policy applies to them can seek advice from the local authority that cared for them. If the individual was cared for by Sefton Council, they can contact the Care Experienced Team on 0345 140 0845 who may need proof of identity before providing any personal information.

Declaration

By completing and submitting the online application form you are declaring that the information given on this form is to the best of your knowledge is correct. Also, you understand that canvassing, either directly or indirectly, of any councillor or employee of the council or the giving of false or misleading information may lead to disqualification and, if appointed, may lead to your dismissal.

Furthermore, you understand that the information will only be used for recruitment and selection purposes and that it will only be kept on file by the authority for 1 year thereafter. If you are appointed to the post then the information that it contains will be used to form part of your personal file for employment purposes (except for disclosure information, if applicable, which will only be kept for 6 months).

If you have submitted a paper application, by signing the declaration you are agreeing to the Council uploading your application details on to the Council's applicant tracking system. In the interests of efficiency and reduced staffing resourcing, all recruitment processes will be managed via the electronic system. We regret that we are unable to accept any paper applications where such consent is not given.

Addressing Equality

As mentioned earlier the Council is committed to achieving equality and will make reasonable adjustment for those covered by appropriate legislation i.e. The Equality Act 2010, Rehabilitation of Offenders Acts etc in order that all groups in society may have access to employment opportunities within the Council. In pursuit of this, the Council will, during the recruitment and selection process, ensure that such applicants are not disadvantaged, i.e. accept audiotape applications, respect religious or cultural beliefs, support, where legal, the rehabilitation of offenders etc.

It is important that you notify the Council if you require any adjustments i.e. have a disability, language difficulty etc. when requesting or submitting your application form. It would also be helpful for you to advise, if you already know, of the type of adjustment/aid you might require for the interview and subsequent employment. If you are invited for interview this will be discussed with you further.

Acknowledgement of Application

As part of the online application process you will receive an automated acknowledgement of your application form. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Applicants for posts within the Council are asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. Although completion of the form is voluntary, the information provided is essential to enable the Council to see the make-up of the candidates that are attracted to its posts and to form future policy. The form is separated from your application on receipt and the information plays no part in the selection process. Your assistance in providing the information is very much appreciated.

Assessment Methods

As part of the selection process for posts the Authority may choose to use assessment exercises as well as interview candidates. The exercises will be relevant and appropriate to the post in question and all shortlisted candidates for the post will sit the same tests. The purpose of using additional assessment methods is so that more information can be obtained about the abilities of each candidate. It also offers candidates the opportunity to display their skills in a wider variety of ways than at an interview alone. The range of exercises may include psychometric tests and work-related exercises such as presentations, in-tray exercises etc. In these situations, further guidance will be given to all candidates

Offer of Employment

Applicants should be aware that if they are successful in gaining employment with the Council then the offer of employment will be subject to medical clearance and proof of the ability to work in this country i.e. National Insurance Number or work permit, as a minimum. Other conditions of employment may include satisfactory references, if not already sought, and depending on the type of work, a valid driving licence, evidence of qualifications or satisfactory Disclosure. Applicants for posts requiring Disclosure will need proof of identification and may have to attend a meeting to complete a form to send to the Disclosure and Barring Service. The offer letter will indicate what conditions apply and if appropriate any other arrangements.

Complaints Procedure

The Authority has a recruitment and selection complaints procedure, which can be used to make a complaint for non-selection for interview, offer of employment or the way in which the process was handled. If you would like to make a complaint you may do so by writing to the Chief Personnel Officer, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, 2nd Floor, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 3NJ. When writing you must provide details of your complaint, the job, department and the Manager responsible for the recruitment, if known.

Queries

If you have a query regarding the post that you are applying for you should contact recruitment@sefton.gov.uk or 0151 934 3213.

Finally, the Council would like to wish you good luck with your application