

# Recruitment Strategy

2008 – 2010



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

# Index

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Context</b>	4
2.1	Corporate Context	4
2.2	External Context	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Deciding to Recruit</b>	5
<b>4</b>	<b>Who We Want to Attract</b>	5
<b>5</b>	<b>How We Want to Attract Them</b>	6
5.1	Developing Our Employees	6
5.2	Value For Money	6
5.3	Raising Our Profile	6
5.4	Accessibility	7
<b>6</b>	<b>Special Schemes</b>	7
6.1.1	Headstart/Modern Apprenticeships	7
6.1.2	Restart	8
6.1.3	Other Under-Represented Groups	8
<b>7</b>	<b>Working in Partnership With Others</b>	8
<b>8</b>	<b>Standards/Quality Assurance</b>	9
<b>9</b>	<b>Environmental Considerations</b>	9
<b>10</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	10
	<b>Action Plan</b>	11

## 1. Introduction

The Council's ambition to create '*A Better City Life*' for residents means delivering sustained improvements to the quality of public services and encouraging the raising of standards of service provided by others on our behalf. Recruiting the right staff is a key part of helping the Council achieve this aim.

- 1.2 This Recruitment Strategy aims to ensure that the Council has a highly skilled, motivated workforce, which is able to respond to the diverse needs of the community.
- 1.3 Assessed as 'Excellent' and aspiring to be the smartest in England whilst maintaining this excellence, the Council will only be able to achieve this aspiration by employing the best people and fully utilising skills. A clear strategy supporting the delivery of workforce plans will also ensure that the Council is seen as transparent, equitable and accessible to all. Just as importantly, it will contribute to our aspiration of having a workforce that represents the diversity of the local community and city.
- 1.4 The Council spends approximately £600,000 per year on recruitment advertising. Add to this other costs associated with recruitment such as agency staff cover, manager's time involved in recruitment, and selection/assessment costs, and the significant financial implications of recruiting become apparent. This, combined with the risks of employing staff who are not competent or unsuitable, means that the Council needs a recruitment strategy that mitigates this risk and ensures efficiency, cost and reputation at all times.
- 1.5 The strategy cannot stand alone if it is to be effective, and it has therefore been produced so that it links with, and supports, other council strategies and plans, in particular:
  - The Personnel Strategy and Workforce Development Plans
  - The Learning and Development Strategy
  - The Cabinet Business Plan
  - The Corporate Equalities Action Plan
  - The Borough's Aims
  - The Community Strategy
- 1.6 Finally, the Council aspires to be an employer of choice for residents, across London and throughout the United Kingdom. A robust recruitment strategy will address our position in the employment market and indirectly support retention of staff by ensuring that recruitment decisions are the right ones.
- 1.7 The development of the strategy has included extensive consultation with local organisations, as well as a review of the priorities of local, regional and national bodies whose work has an impact on the council.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The following departments/organisations contributed to the strategy: Personnel, Kensington Recruitment, Regeneration, Disability and HIV Services, Mental Health, Job Centre Plus, NOVA, Open Age, CNWL Foundation Trust

## **2. Context**

### **2.1 Corporate Context**

A number of internal factors have had an impact on the development of the Recruitment Strategy:

- 2.1.1 Our ambition to be the smartest council in England by using technology better to reduce costs and improve convenience, being responsible stewards of our planet, caring for our customers and being an organisation that people are proud to work for
- 2.1.2 The Space Programme – reviewing the utilisation of office space and ensuring that it meets the Council's future requirements as well as reducing running costs, which, combined with the Home Working and Mobile Working Projects, will enable increased home working and flexible working arrangements
- 2.1.3 The Council's commitment to tackling worklessness within the borough will significantly influence our aims to employ local people, as well as the commitment in our Community Strategy to ensure that local people have opportunities to find out about, and secure jobs with, new and established local employers, including major employers including the Council as the second largest in the Borough, and the Primary Care Trust
- 2.1.4 The Here to Help Programme – ensuring that the customer is at the heart of everything we do, meaning that we need robust selection methods to ensure we recruit people who share our passion for customer service and who can help us in our aspiration of providing smarter services
- 2.1.5 Our usage of temporary agency staff and how we might keep these costs to a minimum by reducing the time taken to recruit to vacant positions being covered by agency staff, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution that temporary staff can make to support an agile, flexible workforce
- 2.1.6 Business groups' workforce development plans and our knowledge of areas/jobs within the Council that have experienced difficulties in recruiting suitable people
- 2.1.7 The current workforce profile and other workforce data including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and local or national targets for addressing under representation, all of which are essential aids to enabling the development of action plans to ensure that our recruitment activity is responsive to changing needs and priorities

### **2.2 External Context**

A number of external factors have had an impact of the development of the Recruitment Strategy:

- 2.2.1 External targets and inspections such as Best Value Performance Indicators, Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Ofsted, CSCI all link to our ability to recruit and retain the right people

- 2.2.2 Statutory changes such as anti-discriminatory employment law, changes to immigration legislation and the creation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority
- 2.2.3 A tighter recruitment market for many professions, as well as national shortages makes attracting the right candidates harder, resulting in the need to create a strong employer brand as well as an emphasis on career development and “growing your own”
- 2.2.4 A change in career expectations, where many people no longer desire or expect a “job for life” and there is much more movement across organisations and sectors than ever before means that we need to embrace this fluidity by becoming more flexible in our requirements
- 2.2.5 The prevailing economic climate is a further consideration and our ambition is to recruit more local people wherever possible in support of our local aims to reduce worklessness and unemployment

### **3. Deciding to Recruit**

- 3.1 Before undertaking any specific recruitment, we will ensure that we only recruit where there is a genuine need to do so. We will do this by:
  - 3.1.1 Reviewing whether the job is genuinely necessary in order to run a high quality service
  - 3.1.2 Considering whether the tasks can be carried out in a different way, by reconfiguring those tasks, combining with another position or by utilising technology
- 3.2 If there is a genuine need to recruit, we will consider a range of options available before undertaking recruitment, such as:
  - 3.2.1 Whether temporary staff could be a more cost effective way of covering the work, either on a short or long term basis, particularly where future changes to service delivery is likely
  - 3.2.2 Whether the job or tasks could lend themselves to any form of social enterprise, for example, targeting under-represented groups (see sections 6 and 7), volunteering or work trials
  - 3.2.3 Whether the job could provide a development opportunity for an existing employee through a secondment or acting up arrangement (see section 5.1.2)

### **4. Who We Want to Attract**

- 4.1 In order to deliver excellent and smarter services, we need excellent and smart thinking people. We will:
  - 4.1.1 Appoint on merit to ensure that we get the best person for the job
  - 4.1.2 Ensure that our recruitment process is fair, transparent, and free from bias

- 4.1.3 Ensure that our selection decisions are only made against criteria that are necessary and relevant in order to do the job
- 4.2 Additionally, we want diversity at all levels of our workforce that reflects the local population so far as possible. We will therefore ensure that local people and under-represented groups have the opportunity to find out about, and secure, jobs within the Council. We will:
  - 4.2.1 Work closely with local partners to help local people and under-represented groups gain employment through a variety of methods (see Section 6)

## **5. How We Want to Attract Them**

### **5.1 Developing our Employees**

We aim to foster a culture of internal development, where our staff are given the right development opportunities to ensure that they are ready for promotion and other opportunities when necessary. To help deliver this, we will:

- 5.1.1 Advertise all vacancies internally as a minimum, with external advertising in the relevant media only where it is felt necessary. Consideration will be given to whether there may be a number of suitable candidates internally before advertising externally. The exception to advertising a vacancy is where it may be suitable for a redeployee or where a vacancy needs to be ring fenced due to restructuring or re-organisations of teams or departments
- 5.1.2 Promote secondment and acting up opportunities widely with an expectation that, unless there is specific and justifiable reason why an opportunity is only available to a limited group of staff, it will be open to all

### **5.2 Value for Money**

- 5.2.1 Where it is necessary to advertise externally, we will select the most appropriate medium that is likely to produce quality applicants, gaining advice from our recruitment advertising agency where appropriate
- 5.2.2 Wherever possible, we will advertise on line rather than hard copy press to keep advertising costs to a minimum
- 5.2.3 We will ensure that all of our externally advertised vacancies are placed on the council's job pages [www.rbkc.gov.uk/jobs](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/jobs) and that applicants will be encouraged to apply for jobs on line wherever possible to support our commitment to modern, streamlined and cost effective recruitment processes
- 5.2.4 We will use creative methods of recruiting where we think a different approach is required, such as open days, appointing from a centralised pool of candidates, using recruitment agencies etc.

### **5.3 Raising Our Profile**

- 5.3.1 We will continue to develop our employer image by ensuring that advertisements are consistent and in line with the Council's agreed house style. In addition, we will work on following the design

through as many elements of the recruitment process as possible, such as the Council's jobs pages [www.rbkc.gov.uk/jobs](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/jobs) and other recruitment literature

- 5.3.2 We will continue to attend job fairs where appropriate to increase our profile as an employer of choice both locally and nationally
- 5.3.3 We will use a variety of other methods to raise our profile as an employer such as attending specific events, holding open days where appropriate, and sending publicity material to targeted institutions
- 5.3.4 We will raise our profile with students and graduates through our Summer Internship Programme and our participation in the National Graduate Development Programme

## **5.4 Accessibility**

- 5.4.1 Whilst we will encourage all applicants to apply for our vacancies on line, we will ensure that alternative ways of applying are available should they be required
- 5.4.2 As a 'Positive About Disabled People' Two Tick employer, we will ensure that those applicants who have indicated that they have a disability are invited to interview if they meet the minimum requirement for the job
- 5.4.3 We will retain flexibility in our approach to working practices, such as offering home working or other flexible ways of working, as well as other initiatives such as job carving<sup>2</sup>

## **6. Special Schemes**

- 6.1 In order to support the Community Strategy in reducing worklessness and getting local people into local jobs, there are a number of different schemes, each at differing stages of development:

### **6.1.1 Headstart/Modern Apprenticeships**

We intend to support the London Task Force on Apprenticeships' aim to deliver more apprenticeships in the public sector by 2012.

Headstart is for people aged 16 to 24 living in the Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Wandsworth, Brent or Westminster, offering a one year placement to undertake a Modern Apprenticeship and gain an NVQ Level 2 in business administration or similar and encouraging young people to consider a career within local government. This scheme has been established for a number of years and we will continue to promote it both externally and internally with the aim to retain as many scheme participants as possible in permanent positions with the Council

---

<sup>2</sup> Job carving is a way of splitting jobs to ensure the most suitable person carries out each task. It is a flexible way of managing a workforce, which allows employers to utilise their staff skills in the most productive way whilst enabling disabled people to make a valuable contribution to the world of work.

We will continue to develop other apprenticeship schemes across the Council, such as Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Building Control

We will also encourage those that deliver a service on our behalf to consider establishing apprenticeship schemes. As an example, Quadron, the Council's grounds maintenance contractor, has established a successful apprenticeship scheme targeted at local young people built on the success of the Headstart scheme

### **6.1.2 Restart**

For unemployed people over fifty years of age living locally, offering a placement of a minimum of six months in various positions across the Council, providing relevant training and confidence in returning to the workforce. This is a new scheme and we will continue to work with local partners to develop this initiative

### **6.1.3 Other Under-Represented Groups**

We will engage with local partners to develop schemes designed to encourage and attract other groups (i.e. People with disabilities or learning disabilities, lone parents, long term unemployed) in working for the Royal Borough, ring fencing vacancies where it is felt necessary

## **7. Working in Partnership with Others**

7.1 In order to deliver this strategy, the Council will work closely with other organisations that can help achieve our objectives. We will develop and maintain effective working relationships with the following departments/organisations:

- Job Centre Plus
- Kensington Recruitment
- Connexions
- Other local organisations with an interest in getting local people into employment
- Economic and Regeneration Team – to ensure the local market has the skills and qualities that are needed within the organisation
- Other boroughs, to pool resources and knowledge to address areas of difficulty in recruitment and retention where appropriate and to create possible opportunities of moving between organisations
- Our partners, such as the PCT, to collaborate and investigate options of working together to address areas of common interest
- Contractors of the council, so that they also support our strategy and encourage them to commit to undertake their own recruitment in a way that supports it. This includes our arrangements for the supply of agency staff.
- Specialist agencies, such as the Employers Forums on Age and Disability, and charities supporting people with a disability into employment

7.2 In addition to the above, we will continue to develop the involvement of service users in the selection process

## **8. Standards/Quality Assurance**

8.1 In order to deliver this strategy, we need to constantly strive to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are streamlined, effective, transparent and follow both current employment legislation and best practice. In order to achieve this, we will:

8.1.1 Ensure that the selection criteria for each vacancy are justifiable, relevant and available to all applicants. A job profile and person specification based on the Councils Performance Development Framework (REAL) will be available to applicants for this purpose

8.1.2 Ensure that our processes satisfy our commitment to the organisation through our service level agreements which are updated on a three-yearly basis with regular reviews of our performance

8.1.3 Constantly review the recruitment processes to ensure that it is streamlined and meets the organisational needs, as well as providing the organisation with quality advice and support relating to recruitment

8.1.4 Work with our Personnel colleagues to ensure that regular management information is obtained on recruitment and that this is used effectively to address areas of concern. In addition, these regular reports will be published on the intranet

8.1.5 Provide regular training on recruitment and selection to our managers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to conduct recruitment and selection appropriately

8.1.6 Constantly monitor our practices against our commitment to be a "Positive About Disabled People" employer and remain aware of other opportunities for accreditation to maintain and improve our standards

## **9. Environmental Considerations**

9.1 Part of our ambition to be the smartest council means being responsible stewards of our planet and limiting our consumption of energy, water and cause less waste. In order for our recruitment strategy to support this, we will:

9.1.1 Encourage applicants to apply on line wherever possible to avoid sending paper application packs and constantly strive work towards a paperless recruitment process

9.1.2 Raise our profile amongst our local community to encourage local people to work for us who could walk or cycle to work rather than by car or public transport

9.1.3 Consider the locality of a candidate as a factor on who to appoint where two or more candidates fulfil the selection criteria within the person specification following interview and a decision needs to be made on who to offer the job to

## **10. Next Steps**

- 10.1 This strategy was produced to set out our approach to recruitment and our commitment to high standards through all areas of recruitment and selection. In order to deliver the strategy, an action plan has been produced which details the precise actions that will be taken, with timescales and responsibilities specified. This includes how the strategy and the action plan are communicated

**RECRUITMENT STRATEGY 2008 - 2010: ACTION PLAN**

STRATEGY REFERENCE	ACTION	TASKS	SUCCESS MEASURES
4.1	<b>Continually review our recruitment process so that it is fair, transparent and free from bias</b>	<p>Ensure that our appointing managers are given adequate support and training in order to make fair and appropriate selection decisions</p> <p>Recruitment audits are undertaken on a selection of advertised vacancies in each business group to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria used is relevant and justifiable to the job</li> <li>• The REAL behaviours are used appropriately throughout the recruitment and selection process</li> <li>• There is appropriate evidence of all recruitment decisions</li> </ul> <p>Undertake an equality impact assessment when changing or developing any aspect of the recruitment process</p>	<p>Adequate training is provided to enable managers to recruit and select effectively</p> <p>Recruitment audits demonstrate that selection criteria is relevant and justifiable, the REAL behaviours are used appropriately and that there is evidence of decisions</p> <p>Any change to the recruitment process has been assessed to ensure that it is not disadvantaging any group of people</p>
5.1	<b>Ensure that opportunities within the Council are widely advertised and available to all our staff</b>	<p>Vacancies are advertised on the council's intranet site and the hard copy Careers Bulletin as a minimum</p> <p>Secondments and acting up opportunities are advertised widely with an expectation that, unless there is specific and justifiable reason why an opportunity is only available to a limited group of staff, it will be open to all</p> <p>Assess vacancies at the point of advertising and consider whether there may be a number of suitable candidates internally before advertising externally Offer guidance on selection and interviews for employees who may be looking to change positions within the Council</p>	<p>All vacancies over 3 months in duration are advertised across the Council (except for redeployment or restructuring situations)</p> <p>Secondments and acting up opportunities are advertised widely across the Council</p> <p>There is evidence of more internal promotions and the cost of external advertising has reduced</p> <p>The REAL jobs sessions have a full attendance and subsequent sessions are run on a regular basis to cater for demand</p>

STRATEGY REFERENCE	ACTION	TASKS	SUCCESS MEASURES
5.2.1	<b>Ensure that our external advertising demonstrates value for money</b>	<p>Use management information to identify successful media and other advertising methods and monitor costs</p> <p>Work closely with our advertising agency to create and develop recruitment advertising to attract quality candidates at minimum cost. This will include assessing whether advertising on line is more effective than hard copy press</p>	<p>The percentage of appointments made first time increases</p> <p>The overall spend on recruitment advertising reduces year on year</p> <p>Statistics show that on line advertising has increased year on year</p>
5.3	<b>Develop our profile and employer image so that we are an employer of choice</b>	<p>Consider further ways to develop our image as an employer of choice within London and the UK, such as:</p> <p>Attending both national and local job fairs to either raise our profile generally or to attract specific professions where it is considered appropriate.</p> <p>Considering running recruitment open days where appropriate</p> <p>Utilising other publicity opportunities such as entering awards</p> <p>Deliver the Summer Internship scheme in 2008 and formally evaluate in Autumn 2008</p> <p>Continue to participate in the National Graduate Development Programme</p>	<p>The Council is seen to have a consistent, high impact advertising style. Research indicates that quality candidates are being attracted and that the percentage of appointments made first time increases</p> <p>The internship scheme attracts positive evaluation from both participants and managers. Any suggestions for improvement are acted upon for 2009 and 2010 schemes.</p> <p>The Council recruits high quality graduates through the National Graduate Development Programme and retains them at the end of the programme</p>

STRATEGY REFERENCE	ACTION	TASKS	SUCCESS MEASURES
5.4	<b>Ensure that our vacancies are accessible to everyone</b>	<p>Ensure that the jobs site is monitored and improved. Look at alternative providers or options for further developing the site. Undertake an equality impact assessment when changing or developing any aspect of the recruitment process</p> <p>Monitor the use of our Disability Symbol by requesting an assessment from our Disability Employment Adviser at Job Centre Plus to gain feedback on our practices, making improvements where necessary</p>	<p>The jobs site remains fit for purpose, is easy to use and any improvements do not disadvantage any group of people</p> <p>Assessment demonstrates that our practices support and meet the requirements of organisations using the Disability Symbol. Actions taken to improve or amend practices where necessary</p>
6.1.2	<b>Develop the Restart Scheme</b>	<p>Create an action plan setting out specific actions required to develop the Restart Scheme. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with local partners</li> <li>• Communicating the scheme to the organisation</li> <li>• Marketing the scheme externally</li> <li>• Agreeing an adapted selection process</li> <li>• Providing information briefing sessions</li> <li>• Creating success stories</li> <li>• Providing regular reports</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> <li>• Budgetary monitoring</li> </ul>	<p>A minimum of six individuals are employed through the Restart scheme in the first year</p> <p>The scheme is well received within the organisation with commitment from business groups to adopt this approach</p> <p>Retention figures demonstrate that individuals on the scheme obtain permanent employment with the Council at the end of their placement</p> <p>Evaluations are positive and recommendations acted upon</p> <p>The scheme is run within its budgetary limits each year</p>

STRATEGY REFERENCE	ACTION	TASKS	SUCCESS MEASURES
6.1.3	<b>Engage with Under-Represented Groups</b>	<p>Develop and maintain relationships with partner organisations to identify suitable methods of attracting under-representing groups in the workforce</p> <p>Possible areas to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job carving (further development)</li> <li>• Application/interview skills training</li> <li>• Work trials/work experience opportunities</li> <li>• Adapting the application process</li> <li>• Raising awareness of financial implications</li> <li>• Overcoming other barriers to work</li> </ul> <p>Communicate aims within the organisation, to ensure that appointing managers understand and have the knowledge, skills and support to consider adopting this approach to recruitment</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for under-represented groups are available within the Council and that these opportunities are filled with competent individuals</p> <p>Any methods of attracting under-represented groups are well received within the organisation with commitment from business groups to vary their approach to recruitment to support these methods</p>
7	<b>Work in partnership with others</b>	<p>Develop and maintain working relationships with partner organisations so that the actions described within this action plan are possible</p> <p>Involve service users in the selection process</p>	<p>The council engages with partner organisations on a regular basis and works closely with them to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>The value of service users are known to each business group and they are involved in the selection process when deemed appropriate</p>

STRATEGY REFERENCE	ACTION	TASKS	SUCCESS MEASURES
8	<b>Standards/Quality Assurance</b>	<p>Ensure that applicants are always provided with the appropriate documentation in order for them to make an informed application against the criteria specified which includes the REAL behaviours</p> <p>Produce regular management information on recruitment performance and statistics on the intranet. Use this information to review the impact of the strategy with business groups and develop action plans to address any areas of concern</p> <p>Regularly review performance against the Personnel Service Level Agreement for business groups and schools</p>	<p>All advertised positions have appropriate documentation available to candidates</p> <p>Areas of good or poor performance are identifiable and discussed with actions</p> <p>Business groups and schools give positive feedback on the service provided by Recruitment</p>