

### **AIR 2283 Response from Finance & Commerce**

I attach a copy of the Council's Recruitment & Selection policy which sets out the processes and procedures which are used by Managers involved in recruitment and selection in the Council, including for Social Workers. The policy document is based on best practice, which should ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and in a professional and equitable manner, at all stages of the recruitment process. Also attached is a copy of the Council's Code of Practice on Safer Recruitment which sets out the standards and requirements that will apply in cases of appointment to positions involving contact with children and vulnerable adults.

The process for recruitment of social workers is similar to that for other posts within the Council but with more regard to safeguarding issues.

Social worker posts are advertised on the Council's jobs website [www.havering.gov.uk/jobs](http://www.havering.gov.uk/jobs) and in appropriate on and off line media as determined by the recruiting manager. Posts are closed usually after a period of approximately 2 weeks.

All stages of the recruitment process are committed to safeguarding issues. In relation to posts within Social Care wording is included in adverts and job and person profiles about the need for satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure checks and for GSCC registration. Applications explicitly request information about previous cautions and convictions including those that are spent.

Although some posts can be turned around very quickly this will vary considerably depending on clearances to be undertaken. By necessity it will be longer for posts within Social Care, especially where CRB's are required to be undertaken. Approximate recommended processing timeframes within recruitment are as follows -

Between closing date & shortlisting – 10 days depending on how many applications are received.

Between shortlisting & completion of interviews – 10 to 15 days

Between conclusion of interviews and job offer – max. 5 days

When the closing date is reached Managers undertake shortlisting in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy (section 15) and ensure that ALL the shortlisting papers are submitted to the Recruitment Team afterwards.

Arrangements for shortlisting and interviews are detailed in a separate guidance note on preparing for interviews, a copy of which is issued to

Managers with their applications. Managers are also provided with templates to use for shortlisting and interviewing to ensure a consistent approach across the Council.

The shortlisting decision sheet should be signed by all of the panel members who will be undertaking the interviews to confirm that they agree with who is to be shortlisted.

Shortlisting is undertaken by assessing each applicant against the essential criteria set out in the person profile as being evidenced from the application form. This may be assessed as met, part met or not met. Any candidate not meeting the essential criteria is not eligible for interview. The successful candidate is determined at interview by similarly being able to demonstrate how they meet the person profile, how well they respond to the various interview questions in this respect and are able to evidence their responses appropriately. The person best able to do this will be appointed to the post.

Applicants are asked to explain and evidence all gaps in employment history. Shortlisting and interview questions for social worker posts should consider the candidate's attitude to children and welfare issues.

Standard questions are asked of all candidates. Recruiting Managers draft these and will also devise tests to be undertaken if considered appropriate.

Records of applications, interview questions and answers are retained for 6 months before being destroyed. Anonymised collated recruitment monitoring information is kept indefinitely.

At least one member of the Interview Panel must have been trained in the Councils Recruitment & Selection policy and the Council is in the process of rolling out specific training in Safer recruitment initially in Social Care but also across other appropriate services within the Council. Going forward the aim is that at least one member of the Interviewing panel appointing staff in Social care will be trained in Safer Recruitment.

CRB and other vettings are completed in line with government regulations and guidance. This includes verification of:

- Identity and change of name
- Qualifications
- References are taken up for at least the last 5 years for employees in Children's Social Care, which is more stringent than for other posts across the Council which is usually 2 years.
- Registration with a regulating body i.e. GSCC.

Concerns about CRB disclosures or other checks are always followed up and there is a rolling programme of CRB's to ensure that all staff's CRB status is updated every 3 years.

At the conclusion of the interviewing exercise the Council's recommended practice is that ALL candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, should be advised of the outcome of their interview as soon as possible after an

appointment has been made. The preferred method is to telephone candidates and they should all be offered the opportunity for feedback on their interview performance