



The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd

Human Resources
Goireasan Daonna

Recruitment & Selection Guidance



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Clàr-innse

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Introduction

This guidance is to provide Lead Officers direction in undertaking recruitment and selection, aligning to the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy. All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process should refer to this guidance.

The aim of the Recruitment and Selection Guidance is to provide Lead Officers (and in some cases Head Teachers) the knowledge and understanding to consistently appoint the best person to each vacancy, thus building a workforce that has the relevant skills and abilities for the Council's current and future needs.

As a Disability Confident Employer, we aim to remove barriers to recruitment that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions may face. We encourage applications from disabled people and by building a diverse workforce through effective recruitment we will ensure that every employee is safe, accepted and respected for who they are.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace that values diversity and promotes equality, ensuring that all candidates are evaluated based on their skills, experiences, and potential, without bias or discrimination.

Lead Officers should use the guidance for all aspects of recruitment and selection, so that a robust, transparent and equality driven selection process is followed to select the best candidate based on merit and ability. The Council aims to be considered an 'employer of choice' within the Highlands and the journey through recruitment should be a positive one for all applicants, Lead Officers and other Panel Members. Information detailing our Employee Benefits and Guidance for Applicants on our Recruitment Process is available on the [HR Microsite](#), and can be downloaded from any of our vacancies on [myjobscotland](#).

Implementation of this guidance will ensure that:

- the Council demonstrates a commitment to equality of opportunity at all stages of the recruitment and selection process
- an efficient and cost-effective procedure is consistently applied
- Service Workforce Planning is considered in the initial stages of recruitment
- all applicants have a positive experience throughout the recruitment process
- only suitable candidates are selected and appointed.

Guidance

This guidance applies to Scottish Joint Council (SJC) employees. Teachers and Associated Professionals whose conditions of service are governed by the [Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers \(SNCT\)](#) and [Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers \(LNCT\) agreements](#) may be subject to different provisions. However, the general principles outlined in this policy will still apply.

Training

Recruitment and Selection e-learning is available on [Traineasy](#) and should be undertaken by all Interview Panel Members.

In-person Recruitment and Selection training is available for all Lead Officers/Head Teachers/Acting Head Teachers and should be completed prior to commencing the process. The e-learning module must be completed prior to attending the in-person training. Please check the [People Development Calendar](#) for available dates.

Equality & Avoidance of Discrimination

This Guidance adheres to the Equality Act 2010 and supports the Council's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#).

The Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its recruitment and employment policies and practices and will ensure that no job applicant is discriminated against at any stage of the recruitment process on the basis of protected characteristics. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and selection process involves:

- promoting an environment which is free from discrimination
- recognising and valuing the differences of individual applicants
- treating all candidates fairly without prejudice
- being aware of and avoiding unconscious bias
- appointing the best person for the job based on merit, skills and ability

- avoiding job criteria that cannot be justified or that means that one group of people is treated less favourably than another.

As a Disability Confident Employer, the Council will [guarantee an interview](#) where a disabled candidate meets the essential criteria for the post. A similar guarantee has been made to the Armed Forces Covenant for ex-service personnel. The Council will also ensure that, where requested, reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants will be made at all stages of the selection process to allow them to fully participate.

The Highland Council includes the following positive action statement in all its vacancies to encourage applications from groups who may underrepresented:

"The Highland Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and is committed to improving the diversity of its workforce. We welcome applications from people from all backgrounds, representative of the communities we serve. We champion diversity, inclusion and wellbeing within the workplace".

The Scottish Government are seeking to address the issues and disadvantage experience by people from racialised minorities in Scotland, please see [their Anti-Racist Employment Strategy](#) for further information. [The Scottish Government Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit](#) provides guidance to improve the diversity of the workforce by recruiting more people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Roles & Responsibilities

Lead Officer/Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher

The Lead Officer is responsible for ensuring that the recruitment and selection process is followed in accordance with this guidance.

HR Transactions Team

The HR Transactions Team manages the Highland Council vacancies that appear on myjobscotland. The HR Transactions Team provides support to Lead Officers throughout the recruitment process in relation to TalentLink and myjobscotland.

The HR Transactions Team generic email boxes are as detailed below:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| General Recruitment enquiries | Recruitment.Enquiries@highland.gov.uk |
| Teaching Recruitment | Staffing.RecruitmentTeaching@highland.gov.uk |
| References | Recruitment.References@highland.gov.uk |
| Disclosure Checks & PVG Membership | Recruitment.Disclosure@highland.gov.uk |



Human Resources (HR)

HR can provide consultancy and advice in relation to good practice. Please contact [HR](#) if you have any queries or concerns about job roles and structures. HR can also provide advice on redeployment, Job Evaluation (including where there is a new job created), appointment of Migrant Workers and EU Settled Status scheme etc., where required.

HR will regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure that they are not discriminatory, are robust and achieve the purpose for which they have been designed.

Education & Learning – Workforce Planning & Staffing Team

Education and Learning Establishment Authority to Recruit (EATR) Forms, New Appointment Forms, Contractual Change Forms and Leaver Forms are routed through the Education and Learning Workforce Planning and Staffing Team. Please ensure where prompted that you identify any Education and Learning post as being school based (even if it may not be) to allow this workflow to take place.

Schools are staffed in line with 'Devolved School Management' staffing levels, with the exception of Additional Support Needs (ASN) staff and any staff funded from specific sources such as Pupil Equity Fund (PEF).

For queries relating to non-teaching staffing, HR System Forms (EATRs, Employee Appointment/Change/Leaver Forms), Maternity leave, Flexible Working requests or any other enquiries regarding to non-teaching conditions of service, please contact the Staffing Officers: clstaffing.nonteaching@highland.gov.uk

The Education & Learning Business Support Team are responsible for advertising approved posts, arranging interviews and undertaking pre-recruitment checks for all posts as well as maintaining the Supply List on behalf of the Service and processing supply claim forms to Payroll. Email: recruitment.enquiries@highland.gov.uk

Additional Support Needs (ASN) Staffing

Pupil Support Assistants are allocated to schools by the area team based on the levels of need in the school on an annual basis. Depending on the movement of pupils, this level of need will potentially change from one school session to the next and occasionally within a session. It should therefore be noted that whilst posts might be advertised to a specific school in the first instance, there will be a need for staff to be redeployed from one school base to another to meet service needs. This will be negotiated with staff through the Head Teacher.

Considerations Prior to Undertaking the Recruitment Process

Considerations Before Recruiting to a Vacant Post

Lead Officers should not automatically advertise a vacant post on a like for like basis, they must first assess with their Line Manager whether the vacancy needs filled. There may be alternative ways of working within the Service/Cluster that can fulfil the duties of the job role without having to recruit or working in a different way. For further Guidance see [Flexible Working](#).



Where a Lead Officer needs to recruit, consideration should be given to their Service Plan and their Service Workforce Planning. Lead Officers will have to think about how services are provided to users, how the team relates to other parts of the Council and external partners and whether any alterations are required to the vacant post

Duration of Post

Lead Officers should decide if the post should be offered as a secondment opportunity, fixed term or permanent role. For further information please refer to [Secondment Policy](#).

Secondment or Temporary/Fixed term post becoming permanent

Where a temporary/fixed term job is being made permanent or there is a secondee, temporary or fixed term employee within a permanent post and it is proposed to make a permanent appointment, depending on the circumstances the incumbent can be considered on a permanent basis without further advertising providing:

- the post has previously been advertised
- the secondment or temporary/fixed term appointment was made following a formal recruitment process.

Secondments, temporary or fixed term posts are not guaranteed to become permanent. Each post is treated individually. For further information please contact [HR](#).

Creation of a new post not on the Service Establishment

Where the Lead Officer and Line Manager have recognised a need for a new role within their Service/Section, this can be created and added to Service Establishment through completion of an 'EATR form' if the new post has an existing 'Approved Post Title'. The Lead Officer must contact [HR](#) where a new Post Title is required as the [Job Evaluation process](#) must be undertaken to confirm the Grade for the job role.

Job Description & Person Specification (non-school vacancies)

The job description should accurately reflect the duties of the post, outlining clearly the responsibilities applicable to the job. This will give potential candidates an understanding of the requirements of the job from which they can assess their interest and suitability.

A person specification is a profile of the attitudes and behaviours of the type of person that is needed to do the job. This is considered the 'essential criteria' and is used to assess the application forms received, to assess evidence provided by candidates at interview and inform the final selection decision. The Lead Officer should ensure that the essential criteria accurately describes the types and level of skills, physical and mental requirements, knowledge and behaviours required of the postholder in carrying out the duties of the post. Lead Officers should update existing job description and person specification into the [Job Description and Person Specification new format](#).

Avoid the use of any criteria or language in job descriptions or job specifications that could be viewed as discriminatory and that cannot be objectively justified. For example, only use terms such as 'recent graduate' or 'highly experienced' when these are actual requirements of the job as these can discriminate against age.

Changes to job description and person specification may have Job Evaluation implications. Should an existing role require changes please discuss with [HR](#). Very minor amendments that do not change the essence of the job description or person specification may be made by the Lead Officer.

Job Description & Person Specification (non-teaching school vacancies)

Contact [Education & Learning Workforce Planning Team](#) for generic job descriptions and person specifications for non-teaching school vacancies.

Redeployment

The Council aims to retain staff who are facing potential redundancy from their post. There may be other instances where redeployment is required e.g. in cases of capability, disability, harassment or ill health. Lead Officers should work with HR to explore redeployment opportunities prior to proceeding to advertise the vacant post.

The Lead Officer should email [HR](#) to check whether there is a suitable employee on the Redeployment Register that could fill the vacancy (unless the post is inappropriate due to hours, location, or job type).

Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

The Lead Officer should consider whether the post is suitable for a Modern Apprenticeship. This may be a longer-term solution that will align with Service Workforce Plan. For more information please email THCMA.Centre@highland.gov.uk.

Completing an EATR Form

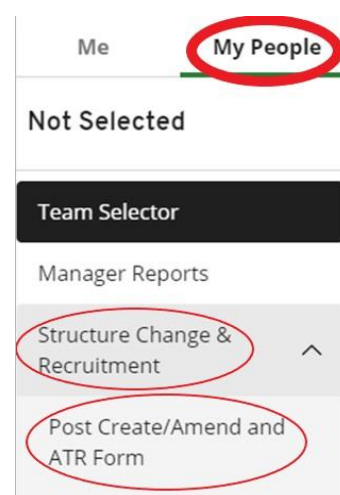
To begin the approval process to advertise a vacancy the online '**Post Creation and/or Amendment and/or Authority to Recruit**' form (referred to as '**EATR**' form) must be completed.

To complete an EATR form Lead Officers will require access to the My People section in [My View](#). To check if you have access to 'My People', log into your My View account where you should be able to see 'My People' tab, as shown. If you do not have this, email [HR Systems Team](#) to request a link to the HR Forms.

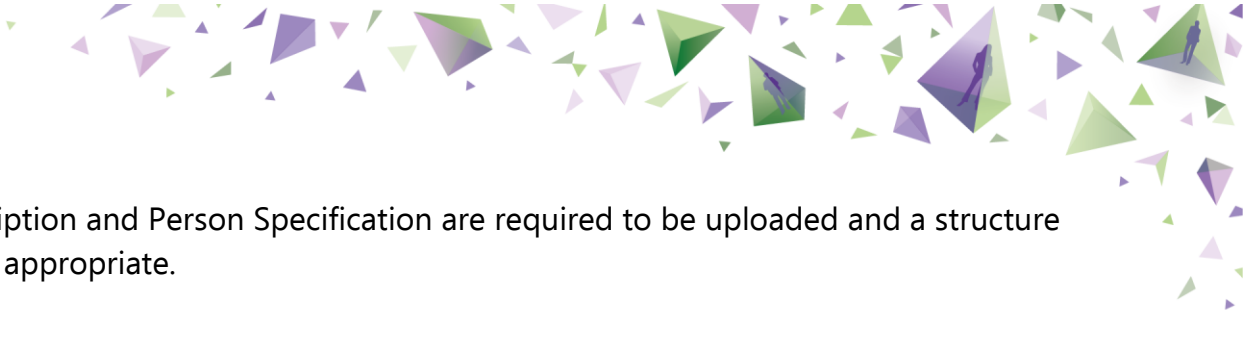
To complete the EATR Form, either follow the instructions below or watch the L&D video [Introduction to HR Forms](#) (skip forward to 5 minutes 50 seconds where the EATR Form is discussed).

1. log into 'My People' via My View
2. select 'Structure Change & Recruitment'
3. select 'Post Create/Amend and ATR form'

This will take you to the EATR (Post Creation and/or Amendment and/or Authority to Recruit (v2) form).



The Lead Officer must have the Post ID (if applicable), Manager's Post ID, Funding and Budget information prior to completing the EATR form. The EATR requires full justification for filling the vacancy.



A Job Description and Person Specification are required to be uploaded and a structure chart where appropriate.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and there is a standard positive action statement included in all Council vacancies appearing on My Job Scotland:

"The Highland Council understands that diversity fosters creativity and innovation. We are committed to equality of opportunity and being fair and inclusive. We welcome applications from people from all backgrounds, representative of the communities we serve and particularly encourage applications from candidates who are likely to be under-represented in our workforce."

All posts should be advertised internally in the first instance. Only Highland Council employees (including those employed on a casual basis), NHS employees, High Life Highland and Agency Staff working for Highland Council are eligible to view and apply for internal vacancies.

All fixed term posts should be advertised as secondment opportunities for permanent staff members and the HR Transactions Team will specify this in the internal advert. Where a fixed term post has not been advertised as a secondment opportunity, this can be requested by a permanent employee. Employees wishing to apply for a fixed-term vacancy on a secondment basis must seek approval from their Line Manager before applying.

If there is a need for the post to be advertised externally, the Lead Officer should provide a justification for external advertisement in the field provided on the EATR form.

Once the EATR form has been submitted the Lead Officer will receive an automated acknowledgement.

Approval Process

The EATR will proceed through Service approval stages. Once it has been approved by the Senior Manager/Chief Officer it will proceed to the HR Transactions Team for processing.

The Lead Officer should be aware that the Approval Stages can take some weeks and should take this into account when planning their recruitment timescales.

If a person other than the vacant post's Line Manager completes the EATR, an automated email will be sent to the Line Manager seeking approval to proceed. Without Line

Manager approval the EATR will not progress to the next approval stage. Where the Line Manager is not available to approve, please email the [HR Systems Team](#).

All Education and Learning Service posts are processed through the Education and Learning Workforce Planning Team.

Advertising Process

Where the EATR form has requested the vacancy is advertised, the HR Transactions Team will process as follows:



***TalentLink** is the recruitment portal used by Highland Council and access will be automatically granted once you complete the EATR form in My View/My People. A confirmation email will be sent to you with further instruction.

****myjobscotland** is the national recruitment portal advertising Scottish local authority vacancies. It is supported by TalentLink, the system which provides users the ability to manage the recruitment process.

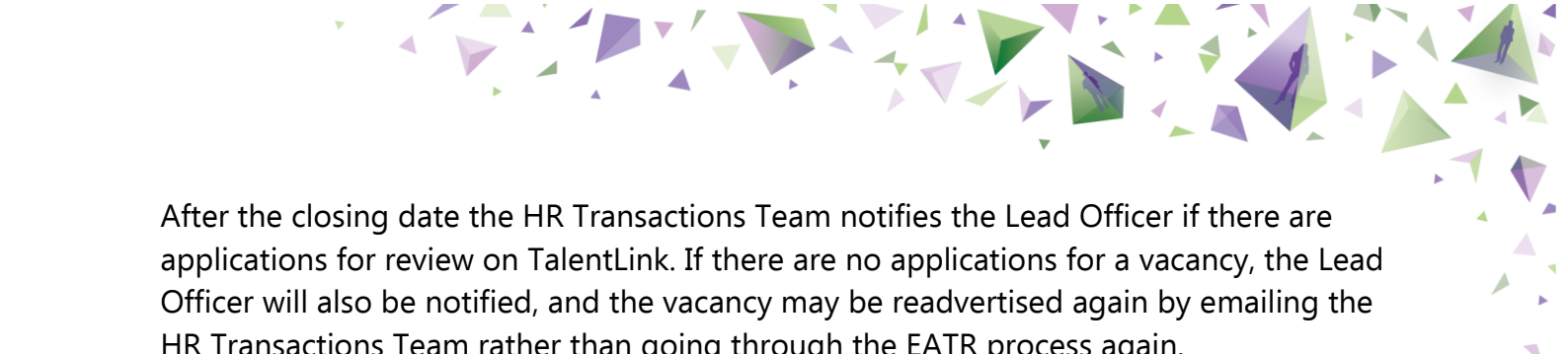
Vacancies usually go live on the myjobscotland recruitment portal every second Tuesday, please see the [Vacancies page](#) which details advertising dates.

Any EATRs approved and passed to the HR Transactions Team by 12 noon on Monday of the previous week will be included in the next advertising cycle. If the deadline is missed, the EATR will be included in the following advertising cycle, 2 weeks later.

Vacancies are usually advertised for a 2-week period on myjobscotland; however, this can be extended upon request to the HR Transactions Team.

Additional Advertising Options should be discussed with the Line Manager and can include:

- Highland Council Social Media platforms (promoted posts on Facebook/Twitter). The Pro-forma for this is available here. This cost is met by the Service, and you will require the budget code to complete the form.
- external publications pertinent to the type of vacancy being advertised. Advertising costs are met by the Service.



After the closing date the HR Transactions Team notifies the Lead Officer if there are applications for review on TalentLink. If there are no applications for a vacancy, the Lead Officer will also be notified, and the vacancy may be readvertised again by emailing the HR Transactions Team rather than going through the EATR process again.

Where an Identical Vacant Post Arises

Where a vacant position has been advertised and another position becomes available, it may be possible to appoint to both positions from one advert and one set of interviews if the following criteria are met:

- the interviews have not taken place for the initial vacant position advertised
- the second vacant position is the same job title, grade, section and Service as the original vacant position advertised (see below for Contract Type/Hours)
- there are at least two appointable candidates
- appropriate approval has been given to appoint to the second vacant position.
-

If interviews have already taken place for the initial vacant position advertised or any of the other above criteria are not met, then the full recruitment process must be undertaken for the second vacant position.

Where all the above criteria are met, at the interview the Lead Officer must:

- inform all candidates that there are now two vacant positions
- make the candidates aware if there is a difference in contract type or hours (see Contract Type/Hours below)
- ask the candidates if they wish to be considered for both vacancies.

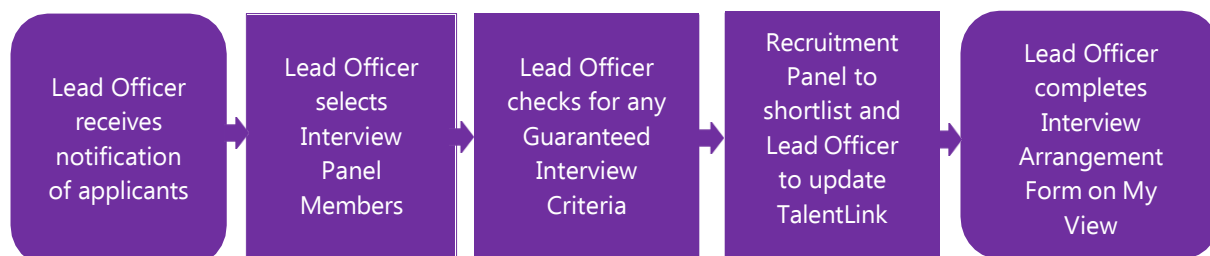
Contract Type - it must be noted that where the initial vacant position advertised was temporary and another position becomes available that is permanent the second (permanent) position must go through a full recruitment process.

Contract Hours – where the initial vacant position has fewer hours available than the second vacant position, a full recruitment process must be undertaken for the second position.

This fair and equitable process ensures that where a second vacant position arises that has more favourable terms than the initial vacant position it must go through a full recruitment process to be made available to all potential interested parties.

Shortlisting Process

Where applications have been received for a vacancy, the Lead Officer and Interview Panel Members should aim to shortlist within 5 working days of receiving notification from the HR Transactions Team.



Interview Panel Composition

Prior to shortlisting the Lead Officer should appoint an appropriate Interview Panel that is representative of the level of the post and also considers the diversity balance of the Panel (for example gender and race). Panel Members should be chosen based on their knowledge, skills and experience, and responsibilities in accordance with the post to be filled.

It is mandatory for the Lead Officer to have undertaken both the e-learning and the in-person Recruitment and Selection Training. All panel members must complete the e-learning Recruitment and Selection Training. They may also wish to undertake the in-person training to develop their practical recruitment and selection skills. To ensure fairness there should be at least two panel members and usually no more than four including the Lead Officer.

The Lead Officer should email Recruitment.Enquiries@highland.gov.uk giving details of the Interview Panel Members requesting their access to the vacancy on TalentLink.

All Recruitment Panel Members will be able to log into TalentLink to view applications online and carry out shortlisting. The Lead Officer is responsible for updating TalentLink.

Where a Candidate is Known – Interview Panel Members Declaring an Interest

The Lead Officer and Interview Panel Members must declare an interest where:

- they are in a close personal relationship with a candidate e.g. husband/wife/spouse, civil partnership, co-habitant

- they are a relative of a candidate e.g. daughter/son, sibling, parent, aunt/uncle, cousin etc. including in-laws and step relatives
- they are a close personal friend of a candidate. e.g. someone known personally and on a social basis outside of work
- they are living in the same household as a candidate. e.g. lodger, stepsibling etc.
- they have previously had a relationship with a candidate e.g. ex-wife/husband/partner etc.

In such circumstances the panel member should withdraw from the Interview Panel and a replacement member substituted. If, for business purposes this is not possible then the balance of the Interview Panel must be considered and a minimum of 2 panel members are required. The Lead Officer should manage this process. If the Lead Officer declares an interest their Line Manager should assume control. Guidance regarding the composition of the Interview Panel can be sought from [HR](#) where necessary.

The selection process must be conducted fairly and equitably with full transparency thus protecting the Lead Officer, candidate and Council from any allegations that personal relationships influenced an appointment of a member of staff.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

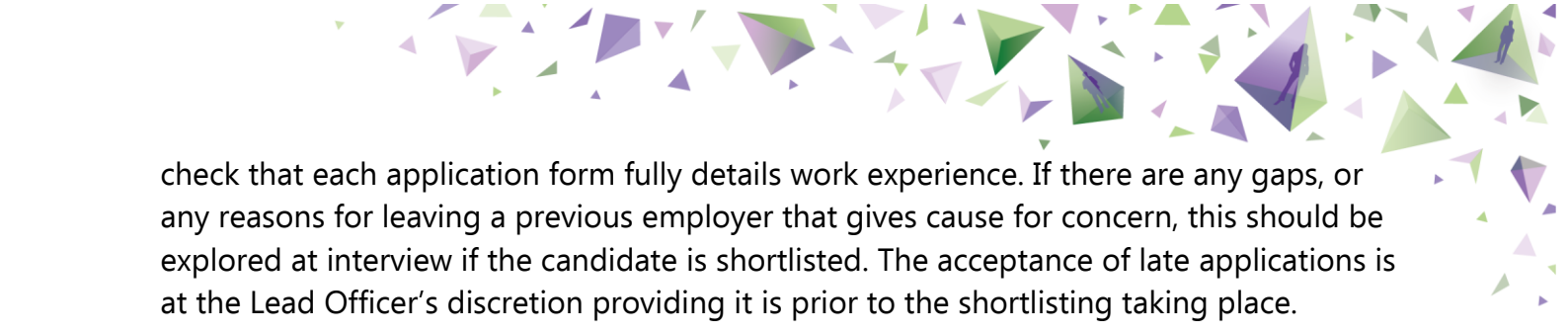
Candidates who have indicated in their application form that they consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition are awarded 1000 points on TalentLink. These points are merely a marker and bears no relevance to the quality of the application. If the applicant meets the essential criteria of the vacancy, the Lead Officer must invite them for interview under the terms of our commitment to the **Disability Confident Scheme** (see also [Candidates with a Disability](#)).

The Highland Council is a Gold Member of the **Armed Forces Covenant** and support those within the Armed Forces Community through the Employer Recognition Scheme.

Candidates who have indicated on their application form that they have been a member of the Armed Forces (Regular or Reservist) or are a spouse/partner or dependent of serving Armed Forces personnel and who meet the essential requirements for the vacancy must be invited for interview under the guaranteed interview scheme. For further information please see the [Armed Forces Covenant – Staff Forces Network](#).

Shortlisting

Shortlisting is a very important part of the process and Interview Panel Members should be aware of and manage any unconscious bias. Interview Panel Members should initially review application forms individually against the essential criteria as per the person specification of the vacancy to help prevent bias. The Interview Panel Members should



check that each application form fully details work experience. If there are any gaps, or any reasons for leaving a previous employer that gives cause for concern, this should be explored at interview if the candidate is shortlisted. The acceptance of late applications is at the Lead Officer's discretion providing it is prior to the shortlisting taking place.

The Interview Panel Members must not exclude or include candidates from the Shortlist on the basis of:

- personal information such as name or address
- a reason connected to a protected characteristic such as gender (unless an occupational requirement applies to the post), race, religion or any of the other protected characteristics
- assumptions about applicant's home and/or family life and how it would affect their work
- assumptions about how an applicant's disability or health record will affect their work
- Trade Union membership or non-union membership
- convictions spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (other than for exempt posts, employments and occupations)
- present employment status, contract status (e.g. fixed term or temporary employment), or previous redundancy
- a candidate's wish to work in a flexible way. For further guidance see [Flexible Working](#)
- political activity, except where the post is specifically politically restricted under the Council's rules of governance.

The Lead Officer co-ordinates the Interview Panel Members to agree a Shortlist of suitable applicants to interview, then updates the status of all applicants on TalentLink to inform which candidates are to progress to interview, and which are unsuccessful. Candidates that are not shortlisted will receive an email to inform them.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Officer to book the facilities required for the interview, and the interview location including the post code is required for the Interview Arrangement Form.

If there is only one candidate who meets the essential criteria in the person specification it is acceptable to shortlist that one individual for interview. The Lead Officer may also contact the HR Transactions Team if they wish to re-advertise. The HR Transactions Team will arrange this and inform the original candidates that their applications will be carried forward.

Once the Shortlist is finalised, and TalentLink updated, the Lead Officer should complete the 'Interview Arrangement Form' via [My View](#)/My People. The interview arrangement

form asks whether a presentation is required, the Lead Officer should complete details if required. The 'Interview Arrangement Form' should be completed 10-14 days in advance of interview date to allow the HR Transactions Team to arrange interviews and for the Interviewees to prepare.

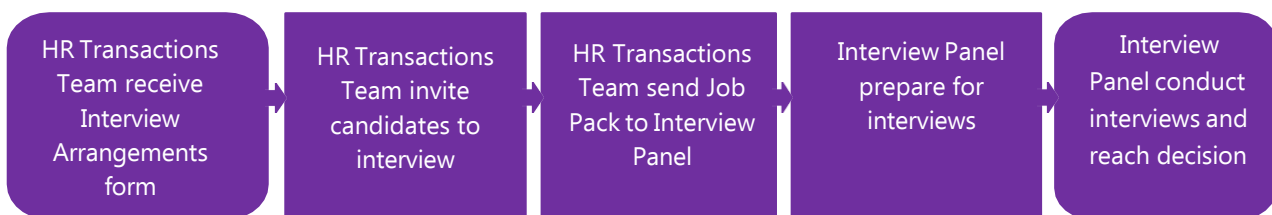
Selection Tests/Presentations

Presentations or selection tests may be used to supplement the evidence gained from the application form and interview processes. Presentation or tests may include:

- a presentation on an appropriate topic to test the candidate's ability to present information and ideas clearly and persuasively
- test to ascertain candidate's knowledge of industry standards e.g. UK vs European driving legislation
- preparation of a written report to test the candidate's ability to research and report on a specific topic
- presentation of a portfolio of work to evidence relevant work experience.

Interview Process

The HR Transactions Team will use the information provided by the Lead Officer in the Interview Arrangements Form to invite shortlisted candidates to attend interview either virtually or in person. Interviewees are given the option to request Reasonable Adjustments if required due to a disability to enable them to attend the interview. It is the Lead Officers responsibility to arrange any requests made.



The HR Transactions Team send out the Job Pack to the Interview Panel Members approximately 3 days before the interview. This includes the application forms, interview timetable, the [Shortlist Record Form](#) and a [Selection Record Summary Form](#) (which the Lead Officer completes).

The purpose of the interview is to:

- provide the Interview Panel with further information regarding how well the
- candidate's attitude and behaviours meet those in the essential criteria of the Person Specification

- explore any questions that the application form did not fully detail (e.g. gaps in employment history)
- give the candidates more information about the Job Role, Service, [Terms & Conditions](#) and working for the Highland Council
- demonstrate the Highland Council's fair and equitable recruitment process and provide a positive experience for all candidates
- identify the most suitable person for the job.

Preparing Interview Questions

The Interview Panel should meet beforehand to discuss the process to be followed and questions to be asked. A list of questions to be asked of all candidates should be agreed. Additional but related question may be asked to probe for more information, establish facts or confirm details that may not have been clear from a candidate's application form. Interview Panel Members should produce questions that address all the essential criteria in the person specification and take care not to include questions that cannot be justified. Questions should not be leading, prompting or helpful to certain candidates.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against an applicant, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of any protected characteristic therefore questions relating to any of these characteristics should be avoided. Panel Members cannot ask candidates any questions about their health except in certain circumstances including to find out whether they can carry out an essential function of the job. For information on the circumstances when questions can be asked about health and disability before a job offer is made, conditionally or unconditionally, refer to guidance from the [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#).

Where the demands of the job include standby rota/weekend working or similar it is appropriate to check with all candidates that they understand that this is a requirement of the role as detailed on the job description (see [Final Steps of Appointment Process](#)).

When the list of questions have been agreed with the Interview Panel, the Lead Officer should complete the [Selection Record Forms](#) that will be used to note evidence at interview.

Conducting the Interview

It is the Lead Officer's responsibility to start, direct and close the interview, ensuring that the Council is represented in a way that promotes good employment practice and a professional work environment. Candidates should be informed that notes will be taken during the interview and that they will have the opportunity to ask any questions at the end. The Lead Officer should explain that a decision will be reached after all interviews have been completed and that they will be contacted with the outcome of the interview.



The Lead Officer should outline the Council terms and conditions of the job role, including starting salary.

The process must give all candidates an equal chance to provide evidence of their match to the person specification.

Panel members should share asking the interview questions and complete each candidate's [Selection Record Form](#) before commencing the next interview. Assessments on individual candidates should not be shared until all interviews are complete.

Reaching a Decision

When all interviews are complete the Lead Officer should initiate the decision-making process. The Interview Panel should assess which of the candidates is the best match to the essential criteria detailed in the person specification.

The Lead Officer should gather the Selection Record Form for each candidate from each Interview Panel Member and these should be used to complete the [Selection Record Summary Form](#). This should be used as the basis for discussion and may assist where Panel members differ in opinion.

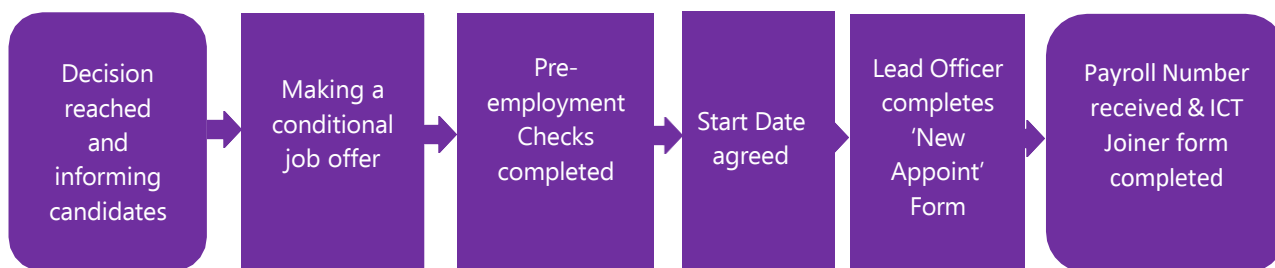
Where more than one candidate meets all the essential attributes, the panel should then consider how well each attribute is met. Criteria that are not already detailed in the person specification cannot be introduced. If a unanimous agreement cannot be reached the Lead Officer should make the decision.

Selection Record Forms and the Selection Record Summary Form should be scanned and emailed to recruitment.enquiries@highland.gov.uk for retention for 12 months. The Lead Officer should shred the hard copies along with any other notes taken during the selection process. Should there be a future Employment Tribunal, these documents can be requested so care must be taken in the appropriateness of notes as comments or notations may be challenged.

If none of the candidates interviewed adequately met the essential criteria, then the panel should not appoint to the vacancy. The Lead Officer should review the job and person specification; quality and appropriateness of the advert and timing of advertising before making a decision as to whether or how to readvertise.

Appointment Process

Once the Interview Panel has decided which candidate to appoint, the Lead Officer should contact the successful candidate first.



Communicating the Decision and Making the Offer

Once the Interview Panel have reached a decision, the Lead Officer should try to contact all interviewees by telephone to update them on the outcome of the interview. The preferred candidate should be contacted first, but all candidates should be contacted within 48 hours of the interview wherever possible.

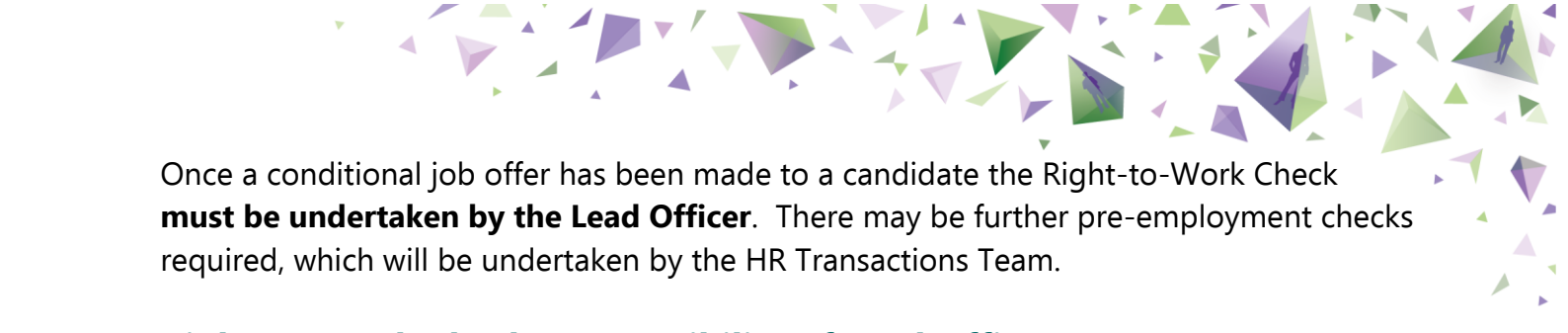
The Lead Officer should speak to the preferred candidate directly to make a verbal **conditional** job offer that is subject to satisfactory [pre-employment checks](#). The offer should be made on the understanding that the candidate agrees to the main conditions of service associated with the post as outlined in the interview. The Lead Officer should reiterate these briefly before asking the candidate to accept the position. In particular, the Lead Officer should ensure that the candidate is aware of the terms and conditions of the job being offered (e.g. – a fixed-term contract end date, standby requirement or annualised hours etc). A provisional start date can be agreed; however, pre-employment conditions **must be met before confirming a start date** and the contract will be drawn up thereafter. The Lead Officer can withdraw a job offer if the pre-employment conditions are not met.

If the preferred candidate does not accept the position and there is a 2nd choice candidate who also met the essential criteria for the post, the Lead Officer can offer the position to them, on the condition that pre-employment checks are met.

Where the preferred candidate accepts the job offer, the Lead Officer should update all candidates' Application Status on TalentLink confirming which candidate was 'hired' and which were 'rejected'.

Pre-employment Checks

Pre-employment checks are necessary to ensure a candidate is eligible for the vacancy and this is considered part of the Council's due diligence. Pre-Employment checks must be carried out in accordance with the six data protection principles, as set out in the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).



Once a conditional job offer has been made to a candidate the Right-to-Work Check **must be undertaken by the Lead Officer**. There may be further pre-employment checks required, which will be undertaken by the HR Transactions Team.

Right-to-Work Check (responsibility of Lead Officer)

It is the Council's legal duty to carry out right-to-work checks to ensure prospective employees can legally work in the UK. A maximum fine of £20,000 may be imposed on an organisation that employs an illegal worker, so it is essential that Lead Officers undertake the right-to-work check.

Lead Officers must undertake a 3 step manual process before employment commences following the Government Guidance [Conducting a manual document-based right to work check](#):

- obtain original documents from either List A or B of the acceptable documents
- check that the documents are genuine and that the person presenting them is the prospective employee and the rightful holder. Undertake these checks on the documents
- copy each document and retain the copy securely, noting the date on which the check was made. Please see the [guidance](#) for further information.

Candidates must be treated fairly and consistently during recruitment, with the same document requirements and checking process applied to all. Lead Officers must not make assumptions about an individual's right to work in the UK.

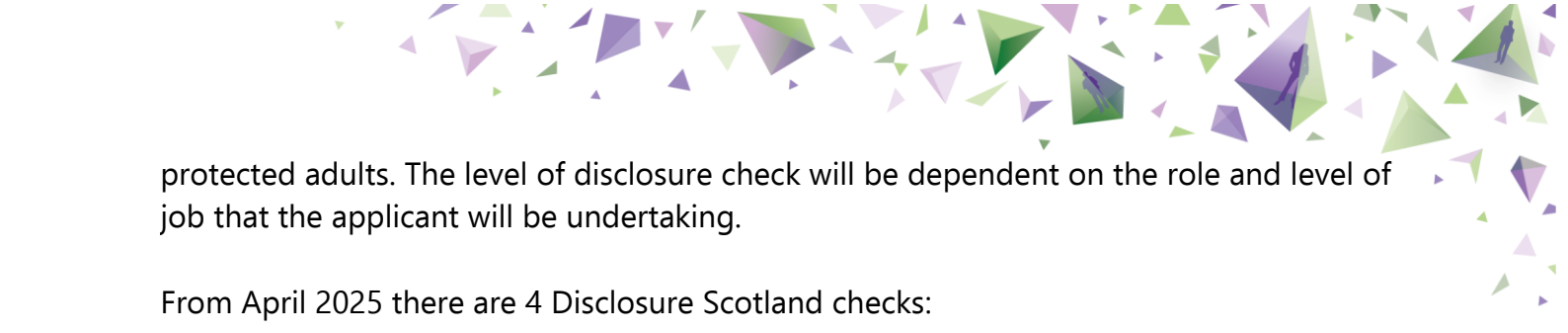
See [Migrant Workers Guidelines](#) for further information on the appointment of Migrant Workers, EU Settled Status scheme and workers from the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.

Disclosure Scotland & Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

For some posts a Disclosure Scotland or PVG is necessary to check whether candidates have a criminal record that prevents them from being employed in that particular role. These checks are undertaken by the HR Transactions Team.

For certain posts the Council will not necessarily refuse to employ an individual who has been convicted of an offence. For further information see [Rehabilitation of Offenders](#) below.

Disclosure Scotland checks and shares information about people's criminal records. This helps employ the right people for certain types of work, like working with children or



protected adults. The level of disclosure check will be dependent on the role and level of job that the applicant will be undertaking.

From April 2025 there are 4 Disclosure Scotland checks:

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 2 with barred list check
- PVG scheme.

Please refer to [Disclosure Scotland](#) for further information. If you have any questions, please contact Recruitment.Disclosure@highland.gov.uk.

References

Highland Council do not seek references for Internal Candidates.

References will be sought by the HR Transactions Team following interview for the preferred candidate only. Two references are required, one must be from the applicant's current employer (or last employer if currently unemployed). If the applicant has never been employed, then two personal references are required. Candidates must be asked to provide an alternative referee if the original referee is a Member of the Interview Panel.

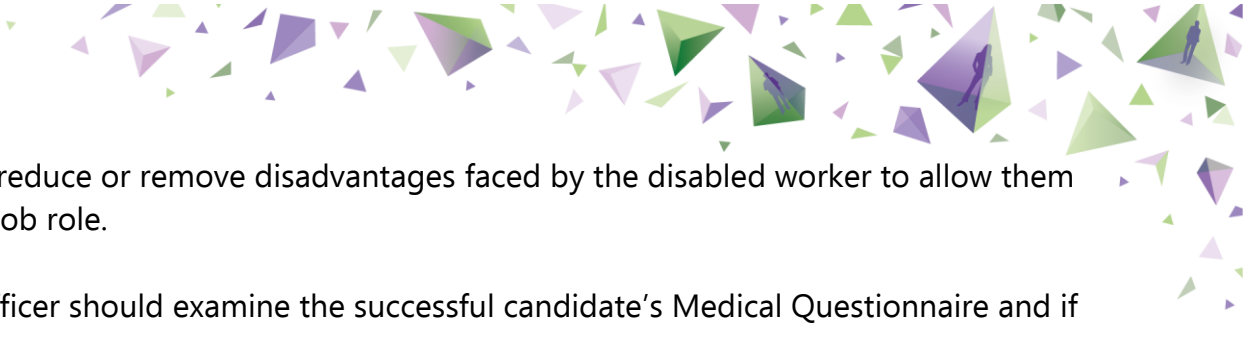
References should be treated with particular care and should only be used to confirm rather than inform a decision to appoint. References should be treated in the strictest confidence with no discussion of content out with the Interview Panel.

Pre-employment Health Checks

If the preferred candidate has identified themselves as having a disability, it is appropriate to ask them questions about their disability and any reasonable adjustments (see [Reasonable Adjustments](#) below) they may require to undertake the post when offering the post on a conditional basis. Internal employees may already have a [Reasonable Adjustment Passport](#) that they may wish to share with the Lead Officer.

The HR Transactions Team sends out a Medical Questionnaire once a conditional offer of employment has been made to preferred candidates that are external to Highland Council or for internal candidates where there is a change of Line Manager. The candidate will complete and return to the Lead Officer who should retain in an electronic file.

Certain medical conditions may affect a candidate's ability to carry out the duties associated with a post. The disclosure of any condition that is classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 may trigger the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments where



required to reduce or remove disadvantages faced by the disabled worker to allow them to fulfil the job role.

The Lead Officer should examine the successful candidate's Medical Questionnaire and if required, seek guidance from [HR](#). HR may advise that the Medical Questionnaire should be forwarded to [Occupational Health](#) who will provide advice on the candidate's ability to carry out the job or any reasonable adjustments required. The Occupational Health Adviser will decide whether further medical advice is required by way of a formal pre-employment medical examination.

Final Steps of Appointment

Once required pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily met the Lead Officer should:


- contact the candidate again to agree a **start date** and confirm **salary** (normally the first point of the Grade unless applicant has relevant experience in the role. Any increase of spinal column points must be approved by the Chief Officer)
- complete '**Appoint an employee to a Post**' form via [My View](#)/My People. Clearly detail duration (fixed term/permanent), working pattern and any allowances (stand- by, sleeping in etc.) as this is required for the contract and Payroll (this form should be completed immediately to produce a Payroll Number and ensure no delay in payment to the employee)
- complete **ICT requirements** for the new employee via the [ICT Service Portal](#). This must be completed as quickly as possible to allow the request to be processed. A Payroll Number is required to set up a new employee online account (email etc) however hardware may be ordered through the ICT Service Catalogue in advance. For further information log into [MyICTPortal](#) and click on 'Knowledge'
- arrange the [Employee Induction](#) on their start date.

Interview Feedback

Interview feedback may be requested by any candidate. Any feedback must be handled sensitively and be evidenced based. Wherever possible the Lead Officer should provide examples of where the candidate could have expanded further on required experience/knowledge/skills.

Candidates with a Disability

As a Disability Confident Leader we aim to remove barriers to recruitment that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions may face and aim to ensure that



individuals can fulfil their potential. We have a commitment to employ and retain disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

Equality Act 2010 – Provision Relating to Disability

The Equality Act 2010 details the rights for both disabled workers and disabled job seekers and makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in relation to employment.

Under the Equality Act a disabled person is defined as anyone with a "*physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*".

Under the Equality Act 2010 an employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments in employment for disabled people at any stage of the recruitment and employment process.

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can include physical conditions, mental illness, neurological conditions, sensory impairments and conditions that are considered to be 'hidden' impairments.

Meeting the specific needs of employees by making reasonable adjustments is a statutory requirement and supports employees to fulfil work potential. Arrangements for making reasonable adjustments should be carried out in discussion with the candidate or employee.

Many reasonable adjustments involve little or no costs and could include:

- making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person
- letting a disabled person work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor for a wheelchair user
- extra time to carry out a selection assessment
- providing specially adapted equipment (e.g. chair, keyboard or height adjustable desk) or software (e.g. voice recognition software)
- ensuring information is available in accessible formats
- temporarily changing the duties of the job
- changing break times or working patterns to work flexibly
- allowing time off for medical appointments.

You should consider whether adopting Hybrid Working arrangements will affect existing or potential needs for reasonable adjustments, for further guidance see [Flexible Working](#) or email [HR](#).



Access to Work Scheme

Where there are costs incurred to make reasonable adjustments because of a disability, support may be available from [Access to Work](#) - a Government Scheme that can provide a grant to pay for, or go towards, practical assistance and equipment. Access to Work also has a Mental Health Support Service. There is an assessment process which determines the type of support an employee will need.

Reasonable Adjustment Passport Scheme

The Council has adopted a [Reasonable Adjustment Passport](#) scheme which is a record of adjustments agreed between an employee who has a health condition or disability and their line manager. The passport acts as a 'live' document detailing reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Where an internal employee is the successful candidate for a post they may share their existing Reasonable Adjustment Passport with the Lead Officer.

For further information refer to [Employing Disabled People and People with Health Conditions](#).

Further Guidance

Canvassing or Bribing Members of the Council or Employees

Canvassing of or bribing (in breach of the Bribery Act 2010) Members of the Council or employees of the Council in connection with any appointment in the Council will disqualify the applicant. It may also lead to disciplinary action being taken against the person canvassing, if an employee of the Council.

In the case of a person offering a bribe, promising a bribe, agreeing to a bribe or giving a bribe, this may also lead to criminal action being taken.



Occupational Requirement

In certain circumstances it is lawful under the Equality Act 2010 for an employer to require a job applicant or worker to have a particular protected characteristic. This is known as an 'occupational requirement' and both of the following must apply:

- the protected characteristic is essential for, and relates to, the main tasks of the job
- the Council can prove it has a good business reason ('objective justification')

An example would be a women's refuge which lawfully provides services to women only can apply a requirement for all members of its staff to be women.

Where there is an Occupational Requirement associated with a job, or where it is considered that there should be, the Lead Officer should consult with [HR](#) at the outset of the recruitment process.

Political Activity

Certain posts are restricted by legislation in the political activities that can be carried out by the successful candidate on taking up appointment.

The Lead Officer should ensure that job descriptions for politically restricted posts contain the clause below explaining the restriction to potential candidates:

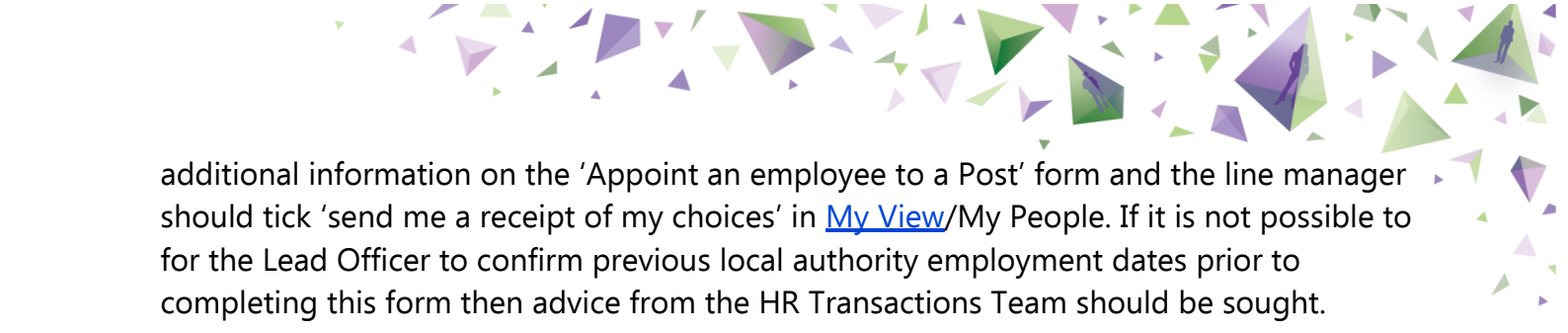
'The post is defined as being politically restricted and will, therefore, be restricted in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004, and by the Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990'.

Please refer to the list of [politically restricted posts](#) for more information on which posts are politically restricted.

Continuous Service

If the preferred candidate has previous Local Government/Public Sector or affiliated service and this is continuous (i.e. without a break of 1 week (7 days, Sunday to Saturday) then this service will count towards the purposes of calculating entitlement to redundancy payments, annual leave, occupational sickness and maternity provisions dates.

Authority/Organisations that this would apply to can be checked in the [Modification Order](#). Details and dates of the previous Local Authority service should be added into the



additional information on the 'Appoint an employee to a Post' form and the line manager should tick 'send me a receipt of my choices' in [My View](#)/My People. If it is not possible to for the Lead Officer to confirm previous local authority employment dates prior to completing this form then advice from the HR Transactions Team should be sought.

Former Employees

If a candidate is a former employee of the Highland Council and terminated their employment through voluntary redundancy or has been retired previously on redundancy or efficiency grounds, the Service Chief Officer must consult the Head of HR before the short listing is undertaken.

Where a candidate has left local government employment due to health reasons, it is essential that a pre-employment medical be carried out. In this situation the Lead Officer should seek advice from [HR](#).

Rehabilitation of Offenders

The Highland Council will not necessarily refuse to employ an individual who has been convicted of an offence. This will depend on the nature of the post and the circumstances and background of the offences, in accordance with the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) which enables some criminal convictions to become "spent" (i.e. - ignored) after a rehabilitation period.

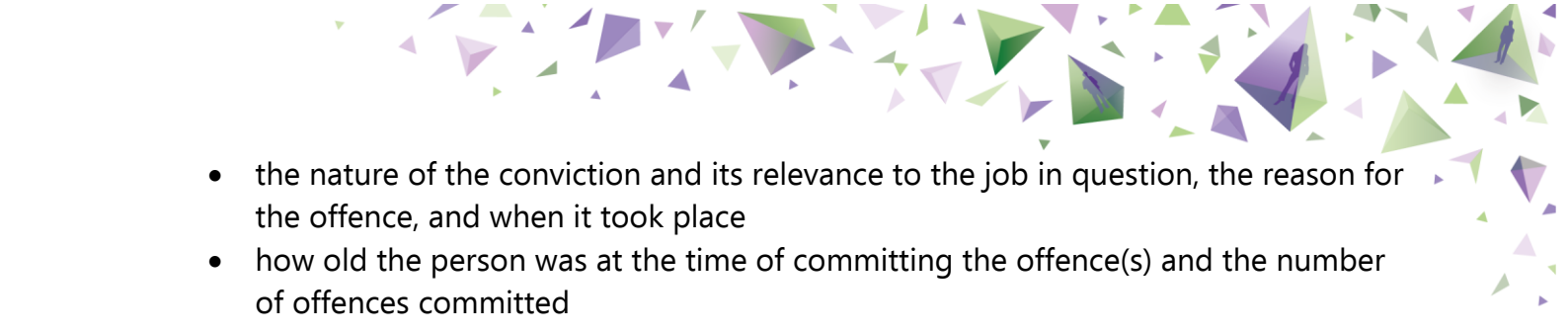
Spent (protected) Convictions

The amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) states that when applying for certain jobs and activities, some convictions and cautions are considered spent (protected) after a specified period of time. This means that they do not need to be disclosed to employers and cannot be taken into account if the candidate discloses a conviction on the application form.

Unspent Convictions

The Highland Council may employ a candidate declaring an unspent conviction depending on the job role and conviction. The application should be considered sensitively and objectively, with focus on the candidate's match to the person specification.

Applicants are given the opportunity to discuss criminal records with the Lead Officer outside of the interview, if preferred. The Lead Officer and Interview Panel should conduct a case-by-case analysis of any convictions and cautions disclosed and consider any relevance to the position sought. Factors to consider include:

- 
- the nature of the conviction and its relevance to the job in question, the reason for the offence, and when it took place
 - how old the person was at the time of committing the offence(s) and the number of offences committed
 - whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
 - whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour
 - any risks identified to the Council's business, clients and employees.

Before short listing a candidate with a criminal record, you must take advice from [HR](#).

Exempt Posts

Certain posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003 and candidates are required to declare convictions that could otherwise be considered spent. Exempt posts are classed as 'regulated work' which require a PVG Membership (eg – Social Worker, Teacher etc.).

For posts which involve a high degree of contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults (regulated work) there is a need to see a person's full criminal history to assess suitability for the position. Applicants are asked to declare information regarding criminal records in the application form. Failure to reveal information relating to any investigations, convictions, cautions, warnings, bindovers or reprimands may result in a withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Youth Recruitment/Employment Programmes

The Council is committed to supporting youth recruitment and operates a number of programmes that provide opportunities for young people in the Highlands to gain employment experience with the Highland Council and to promote both career and personal development. Before making a request to fill a post it is important that the lead officer fully considers the suitability of the post for filling through one of the below programmes:

- Modern/Graduate Apprentices (no age limit)
- Youth Trainees
- Graduate Interns.

Some government funded employment and training programmes may target particular age groups, geographical areas etc. Where this is the case, Lead Officers should consult the specific Programme Manager and [HR](#) for guidance. For further information please email THCMA.Centre@highland.gov.uk or the [Employability Team](#).

Quick Links

The Hyperlinks listed here will redirect you to the related guidance, letters, information, and relevant organisations mentioned in this policy.

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| HR Microsite | Click Here |
| Recruitment & Selection Policy | Click Here |
| Template Job Description & Person Specification | Click Here |
| Equal Opportunities Policy | Click Here |
| Disability Confident | Click Here |
| Reasonable Adjustment Passport | Click Here |
| Armed Forces Covenant | Click Here |
| Application Form Guidance & Employee Benefits | Click Here |
| Flexible Working Arrangements | Click Here |
| Secondment Policy and Guidance | Click Here |
| Pay Terms and Conditions | Click Here |
| Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit | Click Here |



myjobscotland