

Recruitment & Selection Policy

1. Purpose

People are important. They are the most valuable resource in our organisation and our success depends on having people with the right skills and abilities. Without them, we will not deliver the improvements needed in our services/school or continue to provide exceptional services for the residents of South Tyneside.

To make sure that the right people are recruited in the first place, a fair, structured and professional recruitment process must be consistently applied.

These guidelines are intended to provide a model of best practice to help people involved in the recruitment and selection process and apply to all levels of recruitment, up to and including Directors, Heads of Service and School Leaders. The guidelines aim to ensure that the process is carried out in a fair, efficient and cost-effective manner, which takes account of relevant legislation, the Council and School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people and vulnerable adults and the [Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy](#). This will lead to the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced employees, minimise the risk of unlawful discrimination and enable the Council/School to compete effectively in the job market.

All Governing Boards are responsible for ensuring these guidelines are implemented within their own school. Any variation to recruitment and selection procedures must be approved by the Governing Board.

All employees involved in recruitment and selection must familiarise themselves with these guidelines. Recruitment and Selection including Safer Recruitment training will be provided to all Head Teacher, managers and Governors and can be accessed via the Council's [Training Programme](#), or for schools by contacting the Training Team in HR Operations. At least one interviewer on each panel for posts which have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults must have received this training.

South Tyneside Council is committed to children and young people's and vulnerable adults' participation - all posts relating to children and young people should consider children and young people's involvement as a key part of the selection process.

Additional information and advice on recruitment and selection is available from the HR Operations Team, or by viewing a [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of South Tyneside Council (except for the Chief Executive, Directors and the Monitoring Officer for whom separate procedures apply) including school-based employees where the governing bodies of individual schools have adopted the policy.

3. Our Council Values

Our Values are the things we most care about. In applying every policy and process, we must consider and uphold our [PROUD Values](#). These define what we stand for as an organisation, how we work and act.

Professional – we uphold high standards.

Respectful – we value people.

Open and honest – we trust each other.

Understanding and engaging – we care about people.

Deliver what we say we will - we provide great services.

Under each Value is a set of guiding behaviours. These apply to every person who works for or represents South Tyneside Council. They are our promise to residents, each other and to all who interact with the Council.

4. Introduction

This Policy applies to the recruitment of all employment groups and grades including those, that are temporary but excluding workers recruited from an agency. They do not apply in circumstances where an existing employee is required to “act up” to a post to cover for absence (e.g. due to maternity leave, sickness etc.), or pending the appointment of a new postholder. For long term acting up please refer to [Secondment and Acting Up Policy](#).

The aims of the recruitment and selection process are to:

- recruit high quality employees with the right skills on the appropriate contracts to deliver the key objectives of the position and the Council/School
- ensure that all processes support the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and that effective systems and training are in place
- ensure that equality of opportunity is considered as an essential part of recruitment practice, encouraging diversity
- ensure that recruitment is effective as a key public relations exercise for all involved
- ensure that recruitment is fair, consistent, efficient, objective and cost-effective
- help and encourage best practice by training those involved to follow a structured and systematic process of selection
- continuously monitor, review and improve the recruitment process in the light of experience, changes in employment legislation and information obtained from those involved in the process

5. Initial steps in filling a vacancy

To fill a vacant post (*), the following steps should be carried out:

(*) If the post is already covered by a job-share arrangement and one of the partners leave, the remaining sharer may be offered the option of working full time. For more information on job share, please refer to the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

Review the post

If the vacancy is for an existing post, consider whether the role is still needed and if so, have the duties or responsibilities changed since the post was last filled. The existing job description and person specification should be updated and amended as appropriate. The band may also need to be reviewed to reflect the changes to the post. If the post is to be regraded a **staffing proposal** must be completed, submitted and agreed **before** the post can be advertised. Additionally, this should be agreed in conjunction with the Job Evaluation Team to ensure that the new post is correctly banded.

For schools, the Governing Board should also consider whether the role is still needed and if changes are required to the post. Also, if the establishment is to be changed, this should be done via the relevant Governing Board Committee.

Define the job requirements

If it is a new post, you must prepare a [job description](#) and a [person specification](#) (Appendices 6 and 7). Any new post will need to be evaluated by the Job Evaluation Team.

Decide whether the post is to be exempt from Job Sharing

The Council believes that with careful planning and management, most posts are suitable for job share and it would only be in exceptional circumstances that a post would be exempt from job sharing. Examples of situations where job share may not be appropriate include jobs that cannot be carried out by two employees due to the need for continuity; where one to one client contact is high and the lack of continuity would have a negative impact; where there are residential posts, with employees living on site for example Caretakers.

These instances are examples only, not an exhaustive list and a request to exempt a post from job share would be subject to further discussion. The reasons why a post is considered unsuitable for job share must be submitted with the [Post Authorisation Form](#) (Appendix 4) or for posts in schools, discussed with the schools HR Adviser

Nominate an Interview Panel

The interview panel should include at least two interviewers, one of which **must be** included in the 'List of Officers Approved to Exercise Delegated Powers', Part C, Section 3 of the [Council's Constitution](#). For posts having contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults at least one interviewer must have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. For posts that work with children, young people or vulnerable adults you must consider including children and vulnerable adults in the recruitment process. For posts that work with looked after children (LAC), looked after children should be involved in the recruitment process where appropriate. This must be carefully planned in advance. The dates on which the shortlisting and interviews will take place should be decided **before** the post is advertised and must be included on the [Post Authorisation Form](#) (Appendix 4) as this information is sent out to candidates. Recruiting managers should also complete the [Involving children and young people in the recruitment request form](#) (Appendix 5) if applicable, at an early stage in the process.

For a school post, the shortlisting and interview dates should be included on the [School Advert Request Form](#) (Appendix 13).

Authorisation to recruit

The Council has a standard format for all Job Descriptions and Person Specifications that should be used in all instances. Further information and template documents can be found in the [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

To advertise a post a [Post Authorisation Form](#) (Appendix 4) should be completed by the recruiting manager and emailed to the HR Operations Team. This form will then be sent to the relevant Director or delegated officer with a job description, person specification and advert (if necessary).

For school posts, a [School Advert Request Form](#) (Appendix 13) should be completed and sent to HR Operations, with all the above stated documentation.

6. Methods of recruitment

Internal/External Advertising

To promote open competition, avoid indirect discrimination and attract a sufficiently wide field of candidates, vacancies should be made available to external candidates as well as to internal candidates. However, where it is considered that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced internal candidates eligible to apply for a post, or to provide development opportunities, advertising should be restricted, in the first instance, to internal candidates. In special circumstances, such as those described below, these arrangements may be temporarily changed.

- When restructuring is to occur
- In the event of budget reduction exercises, vacancies may initially be restricted to candidates who are existing employees whose jobs are at risk.
- To redeploy an existing employee in a redundancy situation
- To redeploy an employee who becomes medically unfit for their existing job but is considered fit for other duties
- Where applicable, to redeploy an employee whose fixed term contract is not being renewed.
- For further information on redeployment, please refer to the [Redeployment Policy](#).
- Although the normal method of recruitment is to advertise and fill vacancies individually as they occur, you may use other methods as described below in order to streamline the process or reduce costs.

Annual/Specific Recruitment Campaigns

If it is intended to fill several identical or very similar vacancies within a few months, several employees can be recruited by means of a single campaign to take up their appointments over that period.

Employment/Relief Pool

Drawing from a pool of employees can be particularly useful in cases where it is important to fill a vacancy quickly, or where temporary or emergency cover is required.

Appointment of candidates who have applied previously

If a vacancy arises within six months of an identical one having been filled, it is possible to appoint one of the previously unsuccessful candidates, who were appointable, without advertising the post at managers/Head Teacher or Governing Boards discretion (subject to post authorisation form being signed and any necessary checks for example medical clearance, etc.). In this situation, you **must** choose the next best candidate still available who meets at least the essential criteria in the person specification. A Post Authorisation Form must be completed and approved by the Director or delegated officer prior to an offer being made to the candidate.

7. Advertising vacancies

The aim of recruitment advertising is to attract a suitable field of candidates for the post.

“Word of Mouth” recruitment

Vacancies **must not** be advertised by “word of mouth” alone since people/groups that may be under-represented in the area are unlikely to hear about them and it may lead to claims of discrimination.

Advertisements

All recruitment adverts must be placed through HR Operations in order to;

- maximise discounts on advertising costs
- ensure that they are in accordance with the Council and School's [Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy](#)
- ensure that they comply with legislation
- ensure that the vacancy exists and that it can be advertised, for example previous postholder has left, or a new post has been agreed. All new posts graded up to and including Head of Service point 10 will require completion of a Staffing Proposal. Please contact HR Operations for further advice on the establishment of new posts
- guarantee inclusion on the fortnightly Jobs Bulletin
- ensure the advert is produced in the Council's 'corporate style'

All adverts must be based on the facts detailed in the job description and person specification.

For further information on how to compile an advert please refer to the [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

Genuine Occupational Requirement (G.O.R)

As a general rule, all posts must by law, be open to all candidates irrespective of their ethnic origin, sex or age, however, it is permissible in certain circumstances (specified in the Equality Act 2010) to seek only candidates of a particular race, sex or age where this is a G.O.R, for example a single-sex establishment. Such cases are extremely rare. If you consider that a G.O.R may apply to a vacancy, please contact HR Services before taking further action.

Choice of Media

All vacancies open to external candidates are advertised as a minimum on the North East Jobs Portal, in the local Job Centres, on www.southtyneside.info and in the fortnightly Jobs Bulletin. If you want to advertise more widely, HR Operations can advise you on the costs, deadlines and circulation details. Response rates for previous advertisements are also available from HR Operations.

In addition, you may wish to consider further ways to attract applications from under-represented groups, for example by using periodicals aimed at disability groups etc.

Deadline for return of completed applications

Generally, a minimum of two weeks from the appearance of the advert in the fortnightly jobs bulletin should be given to allow candidates sufficient time to receive, complete and return their application form. Applications should be received before 12.00 noon on the closing date and late applications will only be considered, at the discretion of the employing Service/ Group/School, if exceptional circumstances apply. It is recommended that once the shortlisting process has started, late applications (unless the candidate has had agreement from the Service/Group/School) should not be accepted.

8. Information to Candidates

The information provided to candidates by HR Services via the intranet/internet/North East Jobs Portal will include an Application Form, Guidance Notes, Job Description, Person Specification, Supplementary Information Sheet (excluding teaching and former manual worker posts) and any other appropriate information supplied by the employing Service/Group/School.

Application Forms

- all job applicants (whether internal or external) must complete **fully** the standard/online application form. The use of this form ensures that candidates provide the required information in a consistent and standard way which should help to assess and compare them systematically. Other types of application form, for example CV's, will not be accepted.
- in certain circumstances, for instance a restructure, managers may request an expression of interest in place of an application form.
- a candidate who cannot complete an application form personally (for example due to literacy difficulties or a disability) should **not** be excluded from consideration. In such cases, they may get help to complete the form or submit their application in an alternative format, for example on tape.
- Individuals who make an unsolicited job application or casual enquiry about employment to the Head of People and Organisational Change should be advised that recruitment is by application in response to specific advertised vacancies only. If a suitable post is being advertised at that time, the individual will be referred to the Council's Website for further information.

Acknowledging Applications

For applications submitted via the North East Jobs portal, candidates are notified if they are rejected at any stage of the process. For applications that are not made through the portal, for administrative reasons it is Council policy **not** to acknowledge applications. The application form informs candidates that if they have not heard from the Council/School within six weeks of the closing date, they can assume that their application has been unsuccessful.

9. Processing of Applications

Accuracy of Information

The information given in job applications must be full and accurate. Candidates who conceal or misrepresent relevant information are liable to be disqualified or, if already appointed, dismissed from their post. Areas of doubt should be explored at interview.

Candidates Related to Officers and/or Councillors

The Employment Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, Part D, Section 7, Part 1 states:

"The Council will adopt a policy requiring a candidate for any appointment to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing Councillor or Officer of the Council graded at a minimum above SCP 28 or equivalent; or of the partner of such persons"

You should detail this information in the relevant section on the application form.

No candidate so related to a Councillor or any such officer will be appointed without the consent of the Senior HR Manager/Head of People and Organisational Change.

For school posts, any candidate related to a School Leader and/or Governors should detail this information on the application form and inform the School's Governing Board.

Canvassing

Canvassing occurs when a candidate tries to gain an advantage through informal attempts to further their application. The Employment Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, Part D, Section 7, Part 1 states:

'The Council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any Councillor or any employee of the Council for that appointment with the Council'.

'No Councillor or employee of the Council will seek support for any person for any appointment with the Council. This rule shall not preclude any member or employee of the Council from giving a written testimonial of any candidate's ability, experience or character for consideration in conjunction with an individual application, but having given such a testimonial, that member or employee shall take no part in the shortlisting or interview process'.

An employee who is canvassed by, or on behalf of, a job candidate must report this to the Head of People and Organisational Change, or Head Teacher for school posts, who will take appropriate action.

Confidentiality

General Data Protection Regulations gives individuals certain rights in respect of the processing of personal data about them that takes place during the recruitment process. This does not prevent an employer from carrying out an effective recruitment exercise but helps to strike a balance between the employer's needs and the applicant's right to respect, for his or her private life. The Legislation grants employees the right to have a copy of the information that an organisation holds about them.

Information obtained in the course of recruitment and selection may include details of a sensitive or personal nature, which must be treated as confidential by all those involved. This will include keeping information contained in application forms secure, following retention periods for recruitment records and carefully considering which information should be transferred to the employee's personal file. For further information, please refer to the [Human Resources Retention Schedule](#) and the [Recruitment Privacy Notice](#).

10. Shortlisting Candidates

Who should I Shortlist?

The challenge for officers/Head Teachers/managers shortlisting is to reduce the total number of applications to a more manageable number in a way that is reliable, valid, fair and cost-effective. Shortlisting should be carried out:

- by at least two people (one of whom should have management responsibility for the vacant post and be part of the final interview panel)
- as soon as possible after the closing date but by the date specified on the post Authorisation Form, or School Advert Request Form for school posts
- based only on the criteria identified in the person specification
- confidentially

The shortlisting process

If possible, the number of candidates shortlisted should be sufficient to provide a reasonable choice, allowing for withdrawals.

Although those shortlisting can examine relevant information individually, they should reach a joint decision as to which candidates are included on the shortlist. All applications received must be considered unless they have been received after the closing date. In such circumstances, it is at the discretion of the officers/Head Teacher/managers shortlisting as to whether to accept the application form. However, any application forms received after the shortlisting process has been completed should not be accepted.

Managers/Headteachers should ensure that when shortlisting, candidates meet the essential criteria[AR1] [AR2] set out in the person specification in relation to qualifications and work experience. If managers/headteachers wish to waive this, they should speak to their HR Advisor for further guidance, prior to doing so.

For further information on how to shortlist please refer to [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

Candidates with a Disability

As a Disability Confident Employer, the Council/School guarantees to progress to the next stage of selection process all suitably qualified candidates who consider themselves to have a disability and who meet the essential criteria.

Once the initial shortlist has been produced using the essential criteria, officers must contact HR Operations to find out if any of the candidates consider themselves to be disabled. This **must** be carried out **before** desirable criteria are introduced. A 'Positive about Disabled People' flyer will be included with the recruitment documentation to highlight disabled candidates have applied for the post.

If the applicant does not meet all of the essential criteria, check that this is not due to a reason related to their disability. If there is a direct link between their disability and their inability to meet the essential criteria, they should still progress to the next stage of selection.

Candidates who are currently, or have previously been, a looked after child with South Tyneside Council

The Council will guarantee that anyone who is currently, or has previously been, a looked after child with South Tyneside Council, and who meets the essential criteria for the role, will progress to the next stage of the selection process.

Once the initial shortlist has been produced using the essential criteria, officers must contact HR Operations to find out if any of the candidates are eligible for this. This **must** be carried out **before** desirable criteria are introduced. A flyer will be included with the recruitment documentation to highlight that a looked after child has applied for the post.

Candidates who are Ex-forced Personnel

The Council will guarantee that anyone who was previously a member of the armed forces and who meets the essential criteria for the role, will progress to the next stage of the selection process.

Once the initial shortlist has been produced using the essential criteria, officers must contact HR Services to find out if any of the candidates are eligible for this. This **must** be carried out **before** desirable criteria are introduced. A flyer will be included with the recruitment documentation to highlight ex-forces personnel have applied for the post.

Informing Shortlisted Candidates

HR Operations should receive the recruitment pack with the Interview Requirements Form, Interview Schedule – Panel Information and Interview Questions fully completed. HR Operations will send invite letters to shortlisted candidates.

11. The Selection Stage

Selection Methods

The purpose of the selection stage is to assess shortlisted candidates against the criteria in the person specification. It normally includes an interview used with information from other sources, for example application form or references, etc. For guidance on how to conduct interviews, see [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

References

Except where candidates have stated on their application form that a referee should not be contacted prior to the interview, **two** written references **must** be requested for all shortlisted external candidates, for temporary and permanent posts, before interview. For internal candidates, only one written reference is required[AR3] , unless it is a safeguarding post which requires two. This enables a follow up during the interview stage regarding any points that may arise from the information obtained on the reference

Where an applicant states that they prefer referees not to be contacted before interview they will be informed that any subsequent offer would be conditional upon satisfactory references.

Open references will not be accepted.

Candidates are required to supply two employment references, one of which **must** be the candidate's current or most recent employer. The exception to this would be where a candidate has been employed in their current post for less than one month. Where the post applied for involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults and the candidate's current or most recent job did not involve working with these groups, then the recruiting manager should consult HR Operations to seek alternative relevant references. Additionally, where there are any concerns about a candidate working with these groups the Council/School may contact any of the organisations listed on a candidate's application form to obtain a reference.

Applicants will be advised in the recruitment documentation that references will include a request for information on any relevant allegations concerning the applicant's suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The main purpose of a reference is to verify information given by a candidate and to confirm assessments made during the final selection stage. References are likely to be more useful and relevant if referees are sent a job description and person specification. The reference request includes questions relating to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

References will be sent via email from HR Operations.

When a written reference is received for a successful candidate, the recruiting manager/Head Teacher will telephone the referee to ensure that the information received is genuine and will follow the [Reference Checklist for Managers](#) (Appendix 14). This telephone check will be carried out for all safer recruitment posts. The person carrying out the check will record the outcome. The original reference will then be retained on the employee's personal file.

A manager/Head Teacher who is actively involved in a recruitment process will not be able to provide a reference for a candidate being assessed in that same process. In these circumstances the candidate will be asked to supply an alternative referee, or a different manager should be involved in selecting the successful candidate.

Under General Data Protection Regulations references are not exempt from disclosure when in the possession of a new/prospective employer, therefore we may be obliged to disclose the reference to the candidate. They may be called as legal evidence in any allegation of discrimination. References need to be treated with some caution by the panel as they have the potential to be indirectly discriminatory due to the possible prejudices of the referees. Any concerns should be discussed with HR Operations.

12. The Interview

Interview Purpose

The interview is the most popular of the selection techniques. Its purpose is to help assess how closely the candidate meets the criteria contained in the person specification and to give the candidate information about the job. It is a two-way process - the panel needs to assess the candidate, and the candidate needs to decide if they want to work for the Council/School. The way the interview is conducted is vital as it reflects the level of professionalism of the Council/School and recruitment needs to be seen as a significant public relations exercise.

The Interview Panel

Panel interviews enable decisions to be shared. The size and composition of the interview panel will depend upon the nature of the post to be filled. However, for all posts there must be at least two interviewers, one of whom must be authorised to appoint under delegated powers and one of whom should have management responsibility for the post.

At least one interviewer on the panel must have been through Safer Recruitment training, where the role being recruited to is one which has contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

For further information on how to conduct interviews and making the appointment please refer to [Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guide](#).

Offer of Employment

All offers of employment must be made by an officer who is included in the 'List of Officers Approved to Exercise Delegated Powers', Part C, Section 3 of the Council's Constitution.

For school posts, all offers must be made by a Head Teacher/Governor/manager who has powers delegated by the Governing Board to do so.

An offer of appointment must be made conditional upon the receipt and satisfactory completion of the following checks:

- Two references which the Council/School deem satisfactory (or one for internal/none safer recruitment posts)
- Proof of qualifications
- Photographic Proof of identification
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK
- Medical clearance
- Proof of professional registration for example, DFE, Social Worker England, HCPC
- If applicable a Baseline Security Check
- If applicable a Disclosure and Barring Service, plus barring list check and overseas criminal record check
- Internet search check (for safer recruitment posts only, where applicable)

Under no circumstances should an appointment be confirmed or taken up until these clearances are obtained and are deemed satisfactory. However, under exceptional circumstances and subject to a risk assessment being undertaken and authorised by Head of Service/Director/Head Teacher, managers have discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the disclosure and barring service clearance.

Remember, **a verbal offer is legally binding**. If you wish to withdraw an offer of employment you should discuss this in advance with the HR Advisory Team

Once all clearances have been obtained and are deemed satisfactory, the recruiting manager will confirm a start date and HR Operations will issue a contract of employment to the candidate.

Starting Salary

New starters to the Council, which includes Support Staff in schools, will be automatically placed on the spot point within the band. For Council posts, if a manager has been experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties a Staffing Proposal should be submitted to the Head People and Organisational and Change requesting a market forces supplement to be added to the post. In the case of internal employees applying for and obtaining a new post within the same band, where their current salary is a higher SCP, their salary would remain unchanged as long as the new role does not put them into a different band.

Where a new post is subject to a career grade, the starting salary must be agreed in line with the criteria identified in the career grade.

Record Keeping

Information will be collated for the purpose of equality and diversity monitoring throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Following recruitment to a new post the following documents should be contained on the successful candidate's personal file:

- Proof of identity, including photographic evidence
- Application form
- 2 references, including confirmation that the follow up telephone call has been carried out to check authenticity.
- Medical clearance
- Proof of qualifications
- Proof of registration with a professional body for example, DFE, Health Care Professions Council, Social Work England, if applicable
- Record that a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received, if applicable.
- Baseline Security Check, if applicable
- Checks on the right to work in the UK, if applicable
- Further overseas record checks, if applicable
- Notes from interview (including recording sheets from any service user engagement activity)

- Job description and person specification
- Internet search check

To allow for the appointment of a previously unsuccessful candidate to an identical vacancy (see section 3) or to answer a complaint of unlawful discrimination (see section 13), the recruitment file must be kept by HR Operations for 12 months from the date of appointment

The Head of People and Organisational Change may request to study the record of any recruitment exercise. Ofsted may also request sight of recruitment records. Annual recruitment file audits are carried out by representatives of Internal Audit to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

Please refer to Retention of information guidelines for further information.

13. Induction

Induction of all new employees, both permanent and temporary is an important aspect of recruitment. It is the responsibility of the employee's line manager to complete, with the new recruit, the [Induction Checklist](#). In addition, they are to ensure that the employee attends a corporate induction and receives a departmental induction to introduce them to the Council, the service and their role.

For School based staff, they will receive a school induction from their manager/Head Teacher.

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that mandatory and compulsory training identified on the person specification and induction checklist is undertaken in the given timescales.

14. Corporate Training and Development Programme

The [Corporate Learning & Development Programme](#) sets out the Councils commitment to providing a wide range of development opportunities for employees across the organisation.

This includes, during the probationary period and on an on-going basis. Any development needs, identified, within the induction period, should be communicated to the relevant Organisational Development Advisor and/or Hr.training@southtyneside.gov.uk as detailed in the Induction Checklist and Corporate Training and Development Programme.

15. Complaints procedure

Right of complaint

The Council/School has a legal responsibility to ensure that no discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief occurs in the recruitment and selection process. Equality of opportunity must be an integral part of the process.

Candidates for posts have the right to complain to the Council/School if they consider that they have been unlawfully discriminated against during the selection process. It does not affect their right of complaint to an Employment Tribunal under the various employment acts.

Should a candidate wish to raise a complaint regarding the application of this Policy, this should be made in writing to the Head of People and Organisational Change. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure outlined below and the decision given is final.

For recruitment to school posts, any complaint should be made in writing to the Governing Board.

Procedure

The complaint must be made in writing to the Head People and Organisational Change, or the Governing Board for school posts, within three months of the action in question. On receipt of the complaint the Head of People and Organisational Change, or the Governing Board for school posts, will:

- if feasible and appropriate, "freeze" the appointment pending the outcome of an investigation
- complete an investigation into the complaint and report back to the complainant within two weeks
- interview all relevant persons including the complainant, and have access to all documents used during the selection process

- determine what action, if any, will be taken and inform the complainant accordingly
- consider invoking the Disciplinary Procedure if a complaint of discriminatory behaviour is upheld. The decision of the Head of People and Organisational Change, or Governing Board for school posts, is final

16. **Monitoring**

HR Operations will collate and analyse information from the equality and diversity monitoring forms. The Head of People and Organisational Change is also responsible for monitoring the application and effectiveness of this policy and for recommending changes as required.

17. **Equality & Diversity**

South Tyneside Council/School is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity. An equality check of this Policy was carried out in April 2025, and no equality check implications were identified.

Policy approved:	October 2026
Review date:	October 2027