Northwards Housing
North Manchester's Council Homes

RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1.0 Introduction:

1.1 This policy is one of the key people policies underpinning the People Strategy, which supports the delivery of Northwards Housing's, Business and Delivery Plan.

1.2 This document does not form part of the contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements or to ensure that business needs are met.

1.3 Northwards recognises that achievement of its objectives and the securing of its values are dependent on the recruitment, development and the retention of a skilled and committed workforce. This policy and procedure sets out our approach to this.

1.4 All recruitment and selection activities will be carried out in a fair, consistent, effective and professional manner. An effective recruitment process contributes directly to the continuing success of the organisation. This policy and procedure complies with all relevant legislative and other related policy requirements.

1.5 The organisation is committed to applying its Equality Policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Short listing, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, unless lawfully allowed for certain specific posts.

1.6 Normally appointments will be made in accordance with this policy and will, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The ring fencing of posts may be considered where there is a genuine business requirement

1.7 Financial approval for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained before recruitment commences.

1.8 It is Northwards' practice to seek the successful candidate's consent to obtain two written references and documentary proof of qualifications. Any offer of employment will be conditional on both of these being satisfactory.

1.9 It is Northwards policy for certain designated job posts involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults that successful candidates are required to apply for an enhanced disclosure check from the Disclosure &Barring Service (DBS). These roles meet the criteria as set out in The Police Act 1997(criminal records), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and any offer of employment will be conditional on a Barring and Disclosure check being satisfactory.

1.10 Northwards is committed to recruiting a diverse workforce that reflects customer groups in the local community. We aim to be as diverse as the customers we provide for and welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation and will make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates where appropriate.

1.11 The company is committed to equality and diversity and believes everyone has the right to be treated fairly. The focus is on fairness and inclusion, ensuring that merit, competence and potential are the bases for all decisions thereby ensuring recruitment and selection procedures are free from bias.

1.12 Northwards is a committed Living Wage employer.

1.13 Northwards has a responsibility as the council's managing agent for social housing, to proactively engage the local community of north Manchester. This includes involving the community, being an accessible and inclusive local employer and building collaborative working partnerships. We are committed to the principle of creating entry level jobs that are open to our tenants and their families.

1.14 We actively promote equality of opportunity with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience as demonstrated in their job application and supporting documents.

1.15 This policy is consistent with Northwards corporate objectives and contributes to the provision of **promoting equality and diversity, quality services**, developing **successful communities** and **value for money** for north Manchester.

2.0 Purpose:

2.1 Effective recruitment is central to the successful day-to-day functioning of any organisation. Successful recruitment depends on finding people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to deliver organisational

objectives and who have the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and objectives of the organisation.

2.2 It is the aim of this policy and accompanying procedures to:

- explain the minimum requirements and expectations of the recruitment process;
- provide guidelines on Northwards' recruitment and selection process;
- ensure fairness and consistency is applied, in line with the company's Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy and legal compliance with the Equality Act (2010), the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act (2006).
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3.0 Scope of the policy:

3.1 This policy applies to all employees who, for the purposes of this policy will include all permanent and fixed term employees.

3.2 Recruitment is a critical activity, not just for the HR Team but also for line managers who are involved in the selection process. All those involved in recruitment activities should be aware of relevant legislation.

3.3 Implementation of the policy will be incorporated into the Management Development Programme; Recruitment and Selection workshops

3.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Recruitment Procedure attached and supports our policies on equal opportunities.

4.0 Responsibility:

4.1 The Executive Management Team, Heads of Service and delegated officers of each service area are responsible for developing policies within their delegated powers from the Board and Sub-Committees.

Specific responsibilities for managers, employees and the HR team are detailed as follows:

4.2 **Managers:** Every manager has a responsibility to ensure that:

- the Company's recruitment procedure is followed at all times for fairness and consistency;
- they attend the relevant training session on recruitment and selection:
- all direct reports are aware of and follow the recruitment policy;
- the Recruitment Policy is adhered to, is in accordance with and is operated to the Comprehensive Equality Policy;

- accurate records are kept throughout the recruitment and selection process. Any notes or records made to be securely retained and filed in the employee's personal file;
- Clear and honest feedback is given to unsuccessful candidates where requested.

4.3 **Employees:** It is the responsibility of every employee to:

- ensure that, where they have involvement in the recruitment process, they are aware of and comply with the Recruitment Policy;
- follow the guidelines and ensure they adhere to the Comprehensive Equality Policy;
- act as an ambassador for the Company at all times especially when actively involved in the recruitment and selection process.

4.4 **HR Team:** It is the responsibility of the HR Team to:

- support line managers with any issues surrounding recruitment in terms of offering advice, training, guidance and practical support where required;
- ensure that any notes or records made for unsuccessful candidates are retained securely for a minimum period of 6 months in accordance with the Data Protection Policy;
- administer the recruitment process;
- advise potential job applicants;
- bring to the attention of senior managers any issues which may have implications for the whole of the organisation;
- review and amend the Policy as necessary.

5.0 Performance Standards:

5.1 Basic Principles

- All employees involved in any element of the recruitment process will be trained in the necessary skills to carry out that task;
- Job vacancies are open to all applicants and everyone is given equal consideration. All vacancies will be advertised internally, and as required externally in local areas to cover a diverse section of the potential work force;
- All external candidates called for interview must therefore be asked to provide proof of citizenship;
- All entry level posts will be made accessible to our tenants/customers and their families. Assistance to complete the application process will be made available, where applicable.
- All posts will be advertised and offered at the lowest point of the relevant pay grade scales and positions will be offered at the lowest level unless agreed by EMT and in line with equal pay considerations.
- All internal applicants are to be given equal consideration;
- No one is unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of age,

disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation at any stage of the recruitment and selection process;

- The Company will, wherever reasonably possible, employ from the local community;
- The Company will encourage people from groups with different needs or with a past track record of disadvantage or underrepresented groups to apply for jobs.
- All disabled applicants who meet the short listing criteria are guaranteed to go through to the recruitment assessment process.
- The Company will make any reasonable arrangements to allow a disabled applicant to attend a job interview;
- The Company will implement any reasonable adjustments to the working environment to enable a disabled person to consider a particular opportunity.
- The Company will carry out equality monitoring on all applicants both internal and external to capture any of the nine protected characteristics.
- The Company will measure and analyse equality monitoring to ensure that employment policies, practices and procedures promote equality of opportunity.
- If a candidate is unsuccessful they will be given honest and clear feedback, as such a preparation form for feedback is included in this policy to help you prepare feedback and ensure it is constructive and effective. The outcome of the interview will fall in to 4 categories
  - Excellent
  - Very Good
  - Good
  - Needs Improvement / significant weaknesses and will detail areas of improvement needed
- Unsuccessful candidates need to be clear that that even if feedback is excellent/very good or good there will be no obligation in relation to any future vacancies.
- If another vacancy occurs, we will make a decision on how to proceed based on the circumstances at that time – this may include going back to unsuccessful candidates from last time or re-advertising the position.
- If we do go back to unsuccessful candidates from last time, we have no obligation to automatically offer to the "next best" – we may:
  - Offer the next best candidate.
  - Re-interview some of the unsuccessful candidates.
  - Re-interview all of the unsuccessful candidates.
- If a vacancy arises and an employee(s) has been seconded to that position for a significant period, we will carry out a review(s) of the secondment(s). As a result we could decide to:
  - Offer the job to the secondee or offer to the secondee with the best review (if more than one)

- Interview secondees only where there is more than one who we would be happy to offer the job
- Advertise the job

We would make this decision dependant on the circumstances at the time.

5.2 An effective Recruitment and Selection process will ensure:

- Efficiency – cost effective in both methods and sources;
- Effectiveness – attract and retain suitable candidates;
- The 'best-fit' individual to be identified for the job role and the company;
- Fairness – ensuring that throughout the process, decisions are based on competency alone and meet our commitments to equality and diversity.

5.3 Subsequent recruitment plans will help to:

- Identify and assess any future recruitment needs;
- Develop succession plan;
- Formulate and evaluate induction and training programmes;
- Develop a flexible workforce to meet changing business requirements;
- Control workforce costs;
- Assess any future requirements relating to equipment, technology or training
- Provide relevant reports to EMT, the Board and Sub-Committees.

6.0 Equality /Diversity considerations & Equality Impact Assessment:

"This policy is available in large print, Braille, DVD, CD and in languages other than English. It is also subject to the translation policy for Northwards Housing. This policy and its related procedures have been Equality Impact Assessed and a summary of this is detailed below."

7.0 Generic Impact and risk assessments:

Not applicable

8.0 Information sources and reference documents:

Equality ACT 2010
Equal Pay Act 1970
CIPD Annual Survey 2010: Resourcing and Talent Planning
Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Code of Practice: Employment – Avoiding Discrimination in Employment
Equality and Human Rights Commission: Guidance for Employers – Recruitment October 2010
NACRO Recruiting ex-offenders: the employers' perspective
ACAS Recruitment and induction

9.0 Policy information:

This policy and accompanying procedure is linked to:	People Strategy 2013-2018 Northwards Code of Conduct Comprehensive Equality Policy Dignity at Work Policy Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
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RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

CONTENTS:

1 Recruitment Process

a. Establish the Vacancy
b. Internal Vacancies
c. Advertising Vacancies
d. Reviewing Job Descriptions and Person Specifications
e. Recruitment Administration

2 Selection Process

a. Short listing
b. Assessment
c. The Offer
d. Recruitment Records

3 Equal Opportunities: Code of Practice and Guidance

1. The Recruitment Process:

The Recruitment Process is not just about Northwards seeking suitable employees for the future, it is also about candidates finding out more about our business and considering whether Northwards is their employer of choice. The experience of candidates, whether successful or not, at each stage of the process will impact on their view of the organisation. We are committed to ensuring a positive experience through our company materials and communications received by people as part of the recruitment procedure.

The Recruitment Process

1.a. Establish the Vacancy:

The line manager who is responsible for the role should first review, when an employee leaves, whether it is necessary to fill the role like for like or whether there is an opportunity to review staffing requirements to meet changing business needs. All changes to the establishment must be agreed by EMT.

Key questions to consider:

- Is the job still needed?
- Can the duties be better distributed between existing staff?
- Does the job fulfil its purpose?
- Does the job add value or assist the organisation to achieve its' objectives?

We operate a *No Quit* policy to establish the reasons why employees leave the organisation. Managers should review the exit questionnaire information to enable them to take into account any issues raised relating to the job role.

Before any decision is made to recruit externally or internally ensure that active consideration is given to equality of opportunity and access.

Determine whether the role requires the new skills, knowledge and ability of external candidates or Northwards' home grown talent.

The benefits of both to consider are:-

Internal Recruitment

- cost and time savings on advertising
- builds employee morale and security
- allows for succession planning
- cost and time savings on induction and training
- selection is based on personal reviews of employees
- provides career opportunities

External Recruitment

- brings new skills to the team/organisation
- encourages competition
- increases our employer brand exposure in the sector
- brings applicants with current knowledge and qualifications
- improves organisational diversity

1.b. Internal Vacancies:

Internal Applications:
To make an application for an internal opportunity, whether a **secondment** or a **permanent** position, the employee should first speak to their line manager about their intention. They should submit an expression of interest, (approximately 2 sides of A4 will suffice) detailing how they meet the criteria on the Person Specification to the manager listed on the internal vacancy. The application may be a hard copy, or electronically via email.

Prior to any offer of employment being made, the company will take into consideration documentation from the employee's personal file such as personal reviews, attendance etc. A verbal reference will also be sought from the current line manager in support of the application.

Internal Notice Periods
Team Members who are successful in obtaining an alternative role within the business will be required to give notice to their existing line manager that is equivalent to the notice they would be required to provide on leaving the company.

No employee will be released from their existing role within the business until completion of the required notice period, unless by prior agreement with all parties involved.

In exceptional circumstances the Company may dictate an extended notice period is required. Such instances will be discussed and agreed with all relevant areas of the business.

1.c. Advertising Vacancies:

Please contact the HR team in the first instance who will ensure all vacancies are advertised internally and externally in line with our brand standards. They will equally ensure our obligation to redeployment and positively targeted local recruitment is fulfilled and cost-effective.

External advertising sources:

- Northwards website – www.northwardshousing.co.uk/jobs
- Job Centre Plus
- Information Screens in local housing offices
- Local community job flyers / posters
- Local recruitment events – job fairs with Local Employment Partners
- Links with local schools / colleges
- Local and national press
- i-talent.co.uk – free on line recruitment powered by Inside Housing
- Sector trade press
- Stonewall – free website advertising as diversity champions
- Recruitment Agencies – specific roles and only where necessary

All vacancies are advertised internally, providing opportunities for development and career progression where possible. Internal vacancy bulletins are emailed to all employees, with links to the job vacancies page on the intranet.

1.d. Reviewing Job Descriptions / Person Specifications:

A **Job Description** explains the job to the candidates and helps the recruitment process by providing a clear guide to all involved about the requirements of the job. Job Descriptions communicate expectations to employees and managers to help ensure effective performance. They also serve as a marketing tool positively reflecting Northwards as an employer of choice.

A job description must include:

- the job title (which must be gender neutral)
- the location of the job
- grade or salary scale of the post
- the line managers job title to whom the post holder is responsible
- any posts reporting to the post holder
- main purpose of the job

- main duties and responsibilities
- any special working conditions (e.g. evening or weekend work)

Items that should be included in job descriptions are:

- A note that indicates that, as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder
- An indication that the post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the broad scope and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager or EMT.

The **Person Specification** is the key tool of the Recruitment and Selection process. It is the basis for assessment and decision making, allowing you to define the skills, experience, values and commitment necessary to carry out the activities outlined in the job description.

The format is to identify essential and desirable criteria in the following four categories:

1. Education, qualifications and training
2. Experience
3. Work based competencies (i.e. what work based experience does the candidate needs to be able to do the job, such as use Excel, deliver training, working with the public, or work outdoors etc.)
4. Behavioural competencies (such as the ability to influence people, identify problems and work together with a team to find solutions, demonstrate personal drive, ability to work alone, to communicate effectively orally and in written reports etc.)

The minimum criteria set out in the person specification should be the only criteria against which applicants are assessed at the short listing, test and interview stages.

Potential applicants can assess for themselves against a detailed person specification whether they are suitable for the requirements of the post. The Person Specification should meet all legal requirements in line with Employment and Equality Laws.

Great care must be taken if physical requirements are specified. The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to jobs to make them suitable for people with a disability. It is therefore important that any physical requirement is stated in terms of the job that needs to be done. For example a job may require that the appointee ‘must be able to travel to a number of different locations’. In this instance, it will be necessary to consider if an ability to drive is required, or whether or not reasonable adjustments can be made for non-drivers.

1.e. Recruitment Administration:

All documents necessary for the recruitment of new employees are:

- An Application Pack which includes:
  - Applicant cover letter – includes closing date and when interviews are to be held.
  - Application Form – in accessible formats
  - Guidance notes for completing the application form
  - Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
  - Equal Opportunities code of practice
  - Job Description
  - Person Specification

  The pack may also include further information relevant to the particular post – e.g. annual report, organisational structure chart as appropriate.

- Acknowledgement Letter
- Invite to Interview Letter or
- Hold on File Letter or
- Regret (Before/After) Interview Letter
- Interview Questionnaire
- Shortlist Criteria Form

2. Selection:

Selecting candidates involves two main processes: short listing and assessing applicants at interview to decide who should be made a job offer. It is a crucial stage in the overall recruitment process.

The Selection Process

2.a Short listing:

All applications should be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process. All applications should also be acknowledged promptly, presenting a positive image of Northwards.

You will need to review all Applications to 'sift' and match applicants as closely as possible to the job and minimum requirements of the person specification to produce a shortlist of people that you wish to invite to interview.

The shortlist should be prioritised as follows:

- Place any disabled applicants on the list who meet the minimum criteria for the role and ensure any reasonable adjustments have been considered;
- Include all north Manchester unemployed residents;
- Add employed north Manchester residents;
- For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

To avoid any possibility of bias, such sifting should be carried out by a minimum of two members of management and a mutual agreement reached on who to invite to the next stage.

2.b Assessment / Interviewing:

The Interview:

- Interviews, where possible, should be held by the line manager or Head of Service responsible for that position.
- Interviewees must provide documentation of proof of eligibility to work in the UK. A full list of the documents required is available for candidates on the website.
- All interviewers must use the Interview Questionnaire to ensure that all candidates are asked the same standard competency based questions for the role;
- In line with legislation, at interviews, no unnecessary or irrelevant questions are to be asked about personal or domestic circumstances (and/or plans), age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Advice and guidance is available on interviewing to meet the needs of individual disabled employees;
- Notes must be recorded during interview and discussions must take place immediately after each interview to assess each candidate;

- All notes should detail why the candidate was, or was not successful for future reference. Information should be recorded on both the Interview Questionnaire and Short listing Criteria Form.
- A minimum of two people will be required to conduct interview meetings with candidates.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to the HR Team and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or termination of contract.

Making the Decision:
As soon as the recruitment process is complete, a decision needs to be reached on whom to employ, based on any scoring and interview feedback. Consideration needs to be given to all applicants against the original criteria as specified in the Job Description and Person Specification. All appointments must, by law, be made on merit – the best appointable candidate.

After the Interview:
All applicants need to be informed of the outcome as soon as possible, by phone if successful and followed up in writing / email whether successful or not. The HR team will send the appropriate letters. For the successful candidate an offer letter will be sent with details of start date and induction.

Feedback:
All candidates have the right to request and should be provided with feedback on their performance at interview. Feedback should be specific and honest. Managers giving feedback to candidates must ensure that any feedback they give relates to the selection criteria for the post and that the words that they use could not be taken to infer unlawful discrimination.

2.c The Offer:

If you are intending to offer the job, documentation sent by the HR team for 'Making the Offer' will include:

- Offer Letter;
- Reference Request information;
- Enhanced Disclosure Certificate letter / consent - Criminal Records Check where applicable.
- Health Assessment Questionnaire

- Contract of Employment;
- P46
- Starter Form (Personal Details Form – PDF);
- Pension details;

Appointments are subject to a 13 week probationary period (unless the appointee is an existing employee or a Senior Manager on a longer period).

2.d Recruitment Records:

All records should be kept:

- In line with Data Protection Policy/legislation for a maximum period of 6 months following an unsuccessful interview;
- In the event of a complaint being made by an unsuccessful applicant, this should be referred immediately to the HR team. Individuals need to be advised that any complaint should be made in writing to the Senior Manager or Head of Service concerned.

3. Equal Opportunities – Code of Practice and Guidance:

Objectives

We have a commitment to make full use of the talents and resources of all employees and to provide a healthy environment, which will encourage good and productive working relations within the organisation. This Code of Practice describes how the policy is to be applied throughout the Company.

We are particularly concerned to achieve the following objectives:

- No discrimination against any person who applies for a job on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- Selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of experience, qualifications, competence and potential.
- Promotion strictly on the basis of the best candidate for the position.
- Those who must ensure the application of the policy understand their responsibilities, which are highlighted in the Code of Practice.
- Improved employee stability thereby delivering a better customer service.

Recruitment

It is against the Company Comprehensive Equality policy to discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Full reference to all nine of the above protected characteristics is available from the intranet in the

Single Equality Scheme and as an appendix in the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

- All jobs are open to all applicants, except in the case of a job covered by a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ).
- Assumptions or pre-judgements will not be made by recruiters about the suitability of applicants for a particular role.
- No decision is to be made, or preference stated, in advance regarding the outcome of the recruitment and selection process. For example, any request to recruit which restricts candidates on the basis of any of the nine protected characteristics, should not be made.
- All applications are to be given equal consideration.
- All applicants and existing employees are made aware of the Company's policy and practice on recruitment. The Company Policy and Code of Practice will be available from the Intranet.
- Managers are advised and trained on the implementation of the Company's recruitment policy, and have read and understood the Code of Practice.
- All sections of the local community have equal access to job opportunities.
- All recruitment material must positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people and include our brand standards.
- Copies of the Company's Comprehensive Equality Policy are given to the recruitment and advertising agencies with which we deal.
- Vacancies will be advertised in appropriate media and establishments to ensure they reach the target audience.

Age Restrictions

The setting of age limits as a matter of general recruitment policy or as criteria of any specific job must be justified and non-discriminatory.

Any age restriction which is made must be demonstrably valid. An example of a discriminatory age limit could be if a requirement for the age range is set which excludes women who dip in and out of the labour market to bring up their families. The age discrimination regulations cover people of all ages, and it's equally important not to discriminate against younger or older applicants.

Selection Process

It is vital that the selection process is carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels within our organisation and that it is seen to be fair and non-discriminatory.

Interviews

Interviews are only to be conducted by trained personnel. All questions will be relevant to the job. In no case, will assumptions be made about a person's personal and domestic circumstances or plans. Through consistent and unbiased questioning it may be identified that the requirements of the job will

affect the candidate's personal life, e.g. shift patterns; these should be discussed objectively.

If there are any doubts about the legal requirements of the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice, consult your HR team prior to taking any action.

Guaranteed Interviews
All disabled applicants who meet the short listing criteria are guaranteed to go through to the recruitment assessment process. They are not guaranteed to go straight through to the interview stage of recruitment if there are other assessment stages before this (e.g. telephone interview or assessment centre - don't forget to make reasonable adjustments with these if necessary), but are guaranteed to be short listed to the first stage of the process.

Following this, progressing to subsequent stages of the recruitment process/being appointed must be on merit (the best candidate for the job, taking account of necessary reasonable adjustments).

Selection Criteria
Only those qualifications and skills which are important for the job are to be established as criteria for selection. In case of doubt, HR must be consulted as there is a risk of unknowingly infringing discrimination legislation.

Educational and Professional Qualifications
The Company does not insist on educational or qualifications which are higher than those necessary for the job. In assessing educational requirements it should not be assumed that overseas degrees or diplomas are of a lower standard than their UK equivalents.

Experience
Recruiters will recognise the value of experience which needs to be accurately assessed. All previous experience will be taken into account, including: paid employment; voluntary and community work; work within the home and family responsibilities.

Selection Tests
Selection tests (where appropriate) will be used to assess that applicants have the skills, attitudes and abilities required for the job. Tests will only measure that which is relevant to the job and commensurate with the level of the job. Tests used are free of bias and non-discriminatory in content, in administration and in scoring.

Pre-employment checks
A number of employment checks require to be undertaken before a formal offer of employment can be made. It must be ensured that any offer of employment given, is a 'provisional' one, subject to receipt of documentation as shown below.

1) References

References should only be used after interview to confirm a decision, or not, if the references prove to be unsatisfactory. Candidates' permission must be sought prior to seeking references.

Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, attendance, education or training, preferably in a supervisory capacity and a reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer. References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'. Managers must return all copies of any references with the application forms and their interview notes to HR on completion of the recruitment process. References must only be kept in the personal file.

2) Asylum and Immigration

Under the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act (2006), it is a criminal offence to employ someone who does not have the permission to work in the UK. All external candidates at interview must therefore be asked to provide proof of citizenship. Full details are available on the intranet. Note that it will be unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British.

3) Criminal Record Checks

Northwards outsource the administration of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to an external company who assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust. Northwards complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Every subject of a CRB Disclosure will be made aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and a copy available on request. Any matter revealed in a Disclosure will be discussed with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

4) Health Assessment Questionnaire

The organisation requires certain information prior to an individual commencing employment, to ensure that they will be able to perform the requirements of the job and give reliable service, and to ensure compliance with relevant Health and Safety regulations. The information is also required in order to establish whether any reasonable adjustments may need to be made to assist them in performing their duties, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Further advice on this (if applicable) would be obtained through an occupational health report. A health assessment questionnaire is sent to the successful candidate along with the provisional offer of employment.

Terms and Conditions

Employees will not be discriminated against with respect to pay and other Terms and Conditions of Employment because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Pay increases will be made on an equitable basis and in accordance with the Equal Pay Act (1970).

Hours of Work

A wide variety of working hours and patterns are desirable for many people and may be advantageous in certain circumstances to the Company. It is our policy to consider opportunities for employees in different patterns of work and to ensure that these employees are treated equitably. Opportunity for job sharing and flexible working will also be considered.

Training, Learning and Development

Training is provided for all employees to increase their knowledge and skills. This has the advantage to the Company of greater efficiency and maximising potential, while to the employee it opens up new opportunities and prospects. All training course materials reflect our Comprehensive Equality Policy.

Probationary Periods

Most appointments are subject to a 3 month probationary period, unless the appointee is an existing employee or someone transferring from the service of another local authority. Reviews are undertaken throughout the 3 month period and at the end of the period. Subject to satisfactory completion, permanent employment will be confirmed. Advice on performance issues can be sought from the HR Team.

Development Potential

As a Company we are committed to ensure that all employees are provided with opportunities to develop their potential.

Policies make it quite clear that promotions, secondments and transfers are open to all suitably qualified, experienced and competent employees. We will identify employees with potential and encourage promotion, transfers or other suitable opportunities where possible.

4. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

Equality in the workplace will be achieved by the implementation of the policies and practices outlined in this Code and the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

General

The Grievance Procedure is available to individuals who feel that they have received unfair treatment in any of the following:

- In applying for jobs for which he / she is qualified and / or has the experience
- Selection for interview
- The interview process itself
- Training, Learning or development opportunities
- Terms and Conditions of Employment

Formal Stages

In order to proceed, the grievance should be formally raised, in writing. This should be done at the earliest opportunity. A formal meeting to discuss the issues raised will be held as expeditiously as possible.

If the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage, the matter will be referred to the next level of management who will carry out an investigation. The decision reached at this stage will be final.

The procedures will be carried out in the strictest confidence and will not prejudice the employee's current employment or future career prospects.

The right to be accompanied by a representative is offered at all formal stages of the grievance procedure. The employee or the manager hearing the grievance may at any stage of the procedure seek advice from the HR Team.

Discipline

Disciplinary action may be taken against any employee who acts in a manner contrary to the Comprehensive Equality Policy and the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice. Any action and level of sanction will be in line with Company Disciplinary Procedures.