

## Guidance Notes for Candidates

Please read this information before you complete the application form.

**Any part of our recruitment pack i.e. application form, job description, person specification or guidance notes is available in alternative formats on request. If you need a copy of this information in large print, Braille, another language or on cassette, please ask us.**

### Making an Application

Thank you for expressing interest in this vacancy. In this information pack you will find an application form, job description and person specification.

- You must complete the **application form** to apply for this vacancy. You may send in a CV to support your application but you must still complete the application form in full.  
**Proper completion of this form is an essential part of the selection process.**
- Each vacancy is based upon a **job description** and **person specification**. The job description lists the key responsibilities of the post. The person specification outlines the skills, knowledge, experience, and qualifications etc, which are either essential or desirable.  
**Remember you will be selected for interview based entirely on the information you provide in your application form.** So read the job description and person specification very carefully so that you know what the job involves, and match your skills, abilities and knowledge to it.
- **The completed application form must show that you meet all the essential criteria.** To make sure we treat all applicants fairly, we do not make assumptions about you, we only look at what you tell us about yourself in the application form.
- Complete all parts of the application form (including the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form) and ensure that the information that you supply is clear, precise and is aimed at the job you are applying for. Always ensure that any additional sheets are securely attached to your application form.
- Please make sure you return your application form by the closing date.

**No applications can be accepted once shortlisting for the vacancy has begun.**

- After the closing date, shortlisting will start. If we haven't contacted you within 28 days of the closing date you can assume that this time your application has been unsuccessful.



- Please keep free any interview date given, as it is not normally possible to re-arrange an interview.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community and are pleased to help meet any requirements arising as part of the recruitment process, for example from disability. We have an **Interview Guarantee Scheme**. If you have a disability you are guaranteed an interview if you meet the **essential** requirements of the job as set out in the person specification.

## Guidance Notes on completing the Application Form

- **Please use Black ink/ball pen to complete the form, as it may be photocopied.**
- **Section titled Additional Information** - When completing this section of the application form please make sure that you describe fully here and how your experience, skills and abilities meet those described in the job description and person specification.
- **Sections titled Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, Asylum and Immigration Act and the Recruitment Monitoring Form** - Guidance on completing these sections and the recruitment monitoring form is provided in this pack.
- **Previous Employment / Education History** - Please ensure **all** gaps in employment and education history are fully explained on your application form. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Certain jobs, typically those involving substantial access to children or vulnerable adults, require disclosure of all criminal convictions or cautions whatever their nature and whenever they occurred. For these jobs there is an independent check before an appointment is confirmed. It is important that you volunteer such information at the outset. Whether a job is of this type will be clear from the further particulars. (Also see section entitled **Additional Checks for Social Care and Health Posts**)
- **References** - In certain circumstances it may be necessary for us to contact more than 2 references. This might include contacting previous employers or to verify gaps in employment. In this situation you will be asked to provide contact information to enable us to take up these additional references.
- If you require any additional help or guidelines on completing your application please contact any names listed in the application pack. You may find it helpful to keep a photocopy of your application and any supporting information.
- **Date of Birth Information** - Individuals employed within Residential establishments must meet the minimum age requirements set out by the Department of Health

National Minimum Standard, published under the Care Standards Act 2000. Therefore Staffordshire County Council will request age related information as part of the application process for positions within Residential establishments **only**. This information will not be used for any other purpose.

# Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity across all service provision as well as in the employment of our staff. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and we welcome applications from diverse candidates.

Our Equal Opportunities Strategy supports our commitment to promoting inclusion and the provision of high quality, accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse community, and we will work towards ensuring that our staff reflects the diversity of the community.

We will develop a culture where employees are treated as individuals, and where differences are welcomed and embraced. We believe that equality is the responsibility of all employees and every employee can influence how equality is achieved within the County Council. To deliver this we will create an awareness and understanding of equality by ensuring that training and development is an integral part of every employee's individual personal development. This will endorse our commitment to Investors in People.

## Commitment to employees and potential employees

As a fair and reasonable employer we aim to provide equality for all our employees. To achieve this we will:

- Promote and implement best practice in recruitment and selection practices, including taking positive action to address identified imbalances.
- Put in place a fair and transparent pay structure.
- Treat employees with dignity and respect, acknowledge strengths and help to overcome any weaknesses through individual personal development plans and reviews.
- Promote equality of access to training, development and promotion.
- Create a working environment that challenges and eradicates prejudice, harassment, unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- Consult with employees regarding Wellbeing and work -life balance, implementing arrangements where they can be balanced with the needs of the Council.
- Make reasonable adjustments for employees.

**This policy will be supported, implemented and monitored through individual service and business plans, the Corporate Equality Plan and the Council's Race Equality Scheme.**

**This Policy is a living document and will be revised every two years. We welcome your comments as part of this process. Any comments can be received via [ccs.equalities@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ccs.equalities@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

## Employment Terms and Conditions

If you haven't worked in local government before you may find this summary of our employment terms and conditions useful. It is only general guidance and not part of any contract of employment. If you would like any additional information regarding the terms and conditions relating to the post you are applying for, please contact any of the names listed in this application pack.

If we offer you a job you will be given a statement of your terms and conditions of employment, which will become part of the contractual provisions of your employment.

## Annual Leave

The majority of posts are subject to NJC terms and conditions of employment. Under these terms you will be entitled to a minimum of 24 days annual leave (excluding bank holidays). The amount of annual leave increases over time and is based on the level of your post and is pro-rata for part-time employees. Our annual leave year runs from 01<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. In calculating your actual annual leave entitlement we take account of the length of continuous local government service you have as well as your basic salary.

New entrants to the service are entitled to annual leave proportionate to the completed months of service during the leave year of entry.

\*Please note, different annual leave arrangements apply to some categories of staff such as those employed on Soulbury, Teaching or JNC terms and conditions of service (for example School Inspectors or Youth Workers). If these terms apply it will usually be indicated in the Job Description.

### Soulbury Terms & Conditions

Continuous Local Government Service			
0 - 4 years	5 - 14 years	15 - 24 years	25 years +
27	31	32	33

## Public/Extra Statutory and Local Leave

As well as annual leave, our offices are closed on the following days, and paid leave is granted to staff:

Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday  
May Day (first Monday in May)  
Late Spring Bank Holiday (Monday and Tuesday)  
August Bank Holiday (Monday and Tuesday)  
Christmas and Boxing Day  
New Year's Day

## Other Leave

Special leave arrangements also exist which cover bereavement, carer leave, adoption, maternity leave, work break, paternity leave and parental leave.

## Working Hours

The standard working week for full-time staff is 37 hours. Wherever possible we operate a scheme of flexible working hours. Some of our positions are shift-based. Hours of work and shift patterns are usually indicated in the advertisement and application pack. Some posts are eligible for Job Sharing. This allows you to enjoy the benefits of a full-time post, with pro-rata entitlement to salary and annual leave, sick pay, maternity leave and pension rights, while letting you balance the pursuit of a career with your other responsibilities and outside activities. Almost any job can be shared successfully. (Some jobs are not suitable for job sharing, but this will have been made clear when the job is advertised).

## **Politically Restricted Posts**

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, imposes restrictions on political activity for certain local government employees. In some posts you cannot be an elected member of local authorities, an MP or MEP. This affects a minority of posts and you will be told if a post is politically restricted during the recruitment process.

## **Canvassing**

We will not appoint you if you canvass any Members/Officers of the County or of any committee of the Council, directly or indirectly.

## **Proof of Qualification**

You will have to provide proof of relevant qualifications during the selection process.

## **Relationship to Members or Employees**

You must tell us in writing if, to your knowledge, you are related to a Member, or Officer, of Staffordshire County Council.

## **Confirmation in Post**

During the recruitment and selection process we will ask for a variety of information from you. For example, we will ask about your qualifications, your employment history and you will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire. You will be confirmed in post once we have checked and are satisfied with this information and following a probationary period (where applicable).

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act 1998 places responsibilities on us to process personal data that we hold in a fair and proper way. The Act came into force on 1 March 2000 and regulates the use of personal data, including any data you supply on this application form.

The information you give us will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of personnel management.

Staffordshire County Council may contact other organisations (such as the Criminal Records Bureau, previous employer(s), education establishments, etc) to check the factual information you have given on the application form. The information will be stored securely, both manually and electronically and destroyed after 12 months (maximum) if your application is unsuccessful.

If we offer you a job we will use some of the information you give us on the application form in your contract of employment.

The information you give on the recruitment monitoring form will **only** be used to monitor the application of our equal opportunities policy and the effectiveness of our recruitment and advertising strategies.

## Audit Commission Fair Processing Protocol

The authority is under a duty to protect funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided as part of the recruitment process for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

As part of this ongoing responsibility Staffordshire County Council participates in the Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative every two years. Key payroll and other data is used in a matching exercise to identify frauds, data errors etc; For further information please visit [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/nfi](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/nfi)

## Further Information

### The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

We aim to promote equality of opportunity for anyone with the right mix of talent, skills and potential. We only ask that when you complete the section of the application form headed **'Immigration and Asylum Act'** you state if you can provide a National Insurance Number or alternative (see list below) which shows us that you do not need permission to work within the UK.

If we offer you a job you will have to provide us with your National Insurance Number or one of the specified documents listed below.

- A document issued by a previous employer, the Inland Revenue, the Benefits Agency, the Contributions Agency or the Employment Service (or the Northern Ireland equivalents), which states the National Insurance number of the person, named.
- A passport describing the person as a British Citizen or having the right of abode in – or an entitlement to readmission to - the United Kingdom (UK).
- A passport containing a Certificate of Entitlement issued by or on behalf of the Government of the UK certifying that the holder has the right of abode in the UK.
- A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British Citizen.
- A birth certificate issued in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.
- A passport or national identity card issued by the State which is party to the European Economic Area Agreement (EU) and which describes the holder as a national of that State.
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the person named is exempt from immigration control, has indefinite leave to enter, or remain in the UK or has no time limit on his or her stay or a letter issued by the Home Office confirming that the person named has such status.
- A Passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the person named has current leave to enter or remain in the UK and is not precluded from taking the employment in question, or a letter issued by the home office confirming that is the case.
- A UK residence permit issued to a national of a State that is party to the EU.
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder has a current right of residence in the UK as the family member of a named national of a State which is a party to the EU and who is resident in the UK.

- A letter is issued by the immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office indicating that the person named in the letter is a British Citizen or has permission to take employment.
- A passport describing the holder as a British Dependent Territories Citizen and which indicates that the status derives from a connection with Gibraltar.

**Any document you provide must be an original and must be brought with you to interview.**

If you need additional help or guidance completing this section of the application form please contact the names listed in the application pack.

## **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

### **What is the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act?**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act was introduced to make sure that you are not discriminated against when applying for jobs, if you have been convicted of a criminal offence and you have not re-offended for a period of time since the date of your conviction.

The Act allows certain types of convictions to be treated as "spent" after a certain (variable) period of time. You are no longer legally required to disclose to us convictions that have become "spent", unless the post you are applying for is exempted. In the case of more serious crimes, such as where the sentence is more than 30 months imprisonment, the conviction can never become "spent" and must always be taken into account.

Exceptions Orders exist to protect vulnerable client groups such as children, young people, the elderly, sick or disabled. In such cases, we are legally entitled to ask you for details of **all** convictions, even if they are "spent" or "unspent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Cautions, reprimands and final warnings are not criminal convictions and are not covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. They become "spent" immediately and we may only consider them when appointing to exempted posts.

Having an "unspent" conviction will not necessarily bar you from employment. This will depend on the circumstances and background to your offence(s). However, as some of our positions meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, **all applicants who are offered employment to one of these posts will be subject to a criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed.** This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions.

For all other criminal convictions you will only need to disclose any convictions that are **not** 'spent'. A conviction is regarded as spent if you have served a 'rehabilitation period'. These periods vary according to the sentence received as follows: -

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Rehabilitation Periods</b>	
	<b>Age 18 or over when convicted</b>	<b>Under 18 when convicted</b>
Prison and Young Offender Institution - sentence of 6 months or less	7 Years	3 Years
Prison and Young Offender Institution - sentence of more than 6 months – 2½ years	10 Years	5 Years
Fines, compensation order, probation (for people convicted on or after 3 Feb 1995), community service, combination order, action plan, curfew order, drug treatment, reparation order	5 Years	2 Years
Borstal (Abolished 1983)	7 Years	7 Years
Detention Centres	3 Years	3 Years
Absolute Discharge	6 Months	6 Months

**Sentences for which the rehabilitation period varies**

Probation order (for people convicted prior to 3 Feb 1995), conditional discharge, bind over, supervision order, care order	Until the order expires (minimum period of 1 year)
Attendance centre orders	Length of the order plus 1 year
Hospital Order	2 years after the order expires (with a Minimum of 5 years from the date of conviction)

**Suspended Sentences**

A suspended prison sentence is treated as one that has effect and the rehabilitation period is the same as for the full sentence.

**Consecutive and Concurrent sentences**

An offender may be sentenced at one time for several offences. If the court decides that imprisonment is the right penalty for more than one offence, it can order this to run concurrently or consecutively. If a person is sentenced to two terms of imprisonment of six months each, to run concurrently, the person will be subject to a rehabilitation period of 7 years. If they were ordered to run consecutively, they would be subject to a rehabilitation period of ten years.

**Extension of Rehabilitation periods**

Rehabilitation periods may be extended if a person receives further convictions while an original rehabilitation period is still running.

If the second conviction is for a summary offence, ie an offence that can be tried only in a magistrates' court, then the first rehabilitation period is not affected and both rehabilitation periods will run their separate course. If however, the second conviction is more serious and could be tried in crown court, then neither conviction will become spent until the longer rehabilitation period has expired.

Where the original sentence resulted in a disqualification, prohibition or other penalty, the rehabilitation period will not be affected if the person is convicted of a further offence.

## **Additional Checks for Social Care and Health Posts**

Social Care and Health Directorate provide services to some of the County's most vulnerable citizens. We are required to ensure that the confidentiality of our service users is protected in accordance with National Standards laid down by the Government. Therefore, we undertake the most stringent vetting of all our staff. This includes, where appropriate, Criminal Records Checks and also for all appointments, thorough referencing, scrutiny of previous employment history and checks against our Client Information System (CISS) and Personnel Records System. A trace against either of these does not mean that applicants are unsuitable for employment. It does, however, allow us to explore and address any potential conflicts of interest and also assesses suitability for employment. Unfortunately we would not be able to proceed with your application if you object to such a check being undertaken.

Additional information about the County Council and its services can be found on our Website at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

**If you need a copy of this information in large print, Braille, another language or on cassette, please ask us; call 01785 276480**



**"Working Towards Equality for All "**

