



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

People & Development

Safer Recruitment Policy

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What we must
do well



How we support our
communities



We value and support
the people we employ



We efficiently manage
the Service

CONTENTS

1. [Introduction](#)
 - [Core Code of Ethics](#)
 - [National Guidance](#)
2. [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
3. [Aim and Objectives](#)
4. [Associated Documents](#)
 - [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
 - [Legal Reference](#)
 - [National Guidance](#)
5. [General Principles](#)
6. [Legal and Best Practice Considerations](#)
7. [Recruitment and Selection Training](#)
8. [Document Retention](#)
9. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
 - [HR Team](#)
 - [Managers](#)
 - [Training Teams](#)
10. [Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery](#)
11. [Promotions Process](#)
 - [Full-Time Operational Promotions](#)
12. [Prior to Advertising](#)
 - [Filling a Vacancy](#)
 - [New Posts](#)
 - [Job Description](#)
 - [Person Specification](#)
 - [Role Maps](#)
 - [Temporary Appointments](#)
 - [Redeployment Register](#)
 - [Attracting Applicants](#)
13. [Selection Process](#)
 - [Shortlisting](#)
 - [Assessments](#)
 - [Interviews](#)
 - [Community Interview Panel](#)
 - [Disabled Applicants and the Disability Confident Scheme](#)

- [Reasonable Adjustments](#)

14. [Making the Appointment](#)

- [Offer of Employment](#)
- [Checks and Clearances](#)
- [Driving Licence Check](#)
- [Disclosure and Barring](#)
- [Identity Check and Right to Work in the UK](#)
- [Employment History and Reference Check](#)
- [Occupational Health Clearance](#)
- [Professional Registration and Qualification Check](#)
- [Outcome of Pre-Appointment Checks](#)
- [Volunteers](#)

15. [Appointment to Work](#)

- [Contract of Employment](#)
- [Induction](#)
- [Starting Salary](#)
- [Withdrawing a Conditional Offer of Employment](#)
- [Complaints](#)
- [Equal Opportunities Monitoring](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) is committed to attract applications from all sections of the community who can contribute to the work of the Fire Service.

This policy is an integral part of the Humberside Fire Authority's Strategic Plan which describes the Service's overall purpose and values.

The primary objective of recruitment and selection is to attract and secure the services of the best possible candidates for jobs. The recruitment and selection process should also:

- Promote equality and fairness in employment opportunities
- Provide positive attraction measures where appropriate, not prohibited by legislation, in order to address currently under-represented groups in the workforce.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance relating to this policy, which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this policy.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services or in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

The Service welcomes applications from all backgrounds and they shall be treated fairly, regardless of any criteria which is not relevant to the role.

Where required and necessary, the Service will apply appropriate positive action measures in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Service will fulfil its legal and moral obligations to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are made during recruitment processes where necessary.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to ensure that every job applicant (internal and external) applying for a vacant post will receive fair treatment. HFRS will seek to recruit and promote only the best and most suitable people for the job, with selection based on merit.

To achieve the aims, all staff involved in the recruitment process must have received approved training in recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that all candidates have been fairly treated.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- [Equality Impact Assessment – Community Interview Panel](#)
- HFRS Equality Objectives
- Legal References
 - [Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006](#)
 - [Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons 2015](#)
 - [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
 - [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#)
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(UK GDPR\)](#)
 - [Fire Service National Occupational Standards.](#)
 - [Humberside Fire Authority Constitutional Framework](#)
 - [Working Time Regulations](#)
 - [Humberside Fire Authority Constitution](#)
 - [The Grey Book](#)
 - [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- National Guidance
 - [NFCC Fire Service National Occupational Standards](#)
 - [NFCC National Operational Guidance Training Framework.](#)
- [Professional Standards Equality and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Disclosure & Barring Service Policy](#)
- [Redeployment Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- Career Development Programme

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Service recognises its employees are fundamental to its success. A professional approach to safer recruitment enables HFRS to attract, appoint and retain employees with the necessary skills to fulfil its strategic aims in line with the Service's Core Code of Ethics.

The Safer Recruitment Policy is designed to ensure that all recruitment to HFRS, including promotion, is managed in a transparent and equitable way and based upon objective assessment of candidates against the requirements of the job.

This policy applies to the whole workforce regardless of terms and conditions of employment.

Recruitment is a key public relations exercise and should be managed in a way that positively enhances the Service's image and consequently, the ability to attract and appoint high calibre employees as an employee of choice.

The policy has been developed to assist managers during the recruitment and selection process. Human Resources (HR) will be consulted for advice prior to each recruitment exercise and will provide professional advice and support at all stages of the process.

Prior to each recruitment exercise, clear job expectations will be set (advert, job description/person specification), including details of how these expectations will be met and assessed. This information will be accessible by all potential candidates.

6. LEGAL AND BEST PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

The policy has considered the relevant legal and good practice recommendations including the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons 2015, Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and Equality Act 2010 ([see Section 4. Associated Documents](#))

7. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION TRAINING

The Service provides inclusive recruitment and selection training to panel members. Advice and support must be sought from the HR team by recruiting managers and panel members throughout the recruitment and selection process.

8. DOCUMENT RETENTION

Documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation. Recruitment documentation from unsuccessful applicants will be kept for 6 months and the application forms for successful applicants will be held on their personal file. Retention of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures is subject to separate arrangements.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HR team will:

- Complete agreed recruitment administration in line with agreed timescales.
- Administer the DBS checking process in line with the Service's DBS Policy and liaise with HR and managers as appropriate.
- Complete professional registration and qualification checks.
- Periodically review the available advertising options for recruitment and pursue areas for improvement.
- Participate in local workforce planning meetings.
- Oversee review of this policy and procedure in line with legislation, HFRS principles and behaviours and good practice.
- Provide specialist advice and training to managers with regards to recruitment and selection.
- Proactively review recruitment campaigns to ensure objectives have been met and that applicants, shortlisted candidates and appointed candidates are representative of local community and recruitment markets.
- Provide advice on writing job descriptions and person specifications.
- Liaise with local managers to facilitate the redeployment of staff and oversee the redeployment register.

Managers will:

- Attend training prior to taking part in recruitment and selection exercises.
- Ensure that all recruitment activity is conducted in line with this policy and procedure and that they have a thorough understanding of the procedure.
- Be able to objectively justify decisions made during the recruitment process.
- Ensure that shortlisting, assessments and all other stages of the recruitment process are completed in a timely manner, this includes the advertisement of the post.
- Ensure that there is effective and timely liaison with the HR team.

Training teams will:

- Provide appropriate assessments where necessary.
- Ensure that the HR team is appropriately informed about current employees who have not achieved the required standard on any necessary training course.

10. ANTI-FRAUD, CORRUPTION & BRIBERY

The Service is committed to taking all necessary steps to counter fraud, bribery and corruption.

Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption in the context of recruitment, may include fraud associated with false misrepresentation or by failing to disclose information.

11. PROMOTIONS PROCESS

Full-Time Operational Promotions

We recognise that the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours starts before a member of staff actively applies for promotion and the time that each individual needs to develop will vary dependent on their own circumstances and aspirations. In order to ensure a ready supply of full-time operational Crew, Watch and Station Managers to fulfil temporary and substantive roles, applicants will complete the Development Portfolio pathway process.

The pathway process consists of several key stages initiated by a Maximising Potential Conversation, followed by pre-Portfolio development and preparation, completion of the Portfolio Workbook and ending with a professional discussion based on the contents of the individual's portfolio workbook.

Firefighters and Crew Managers who are promoted will be posted to a different Watch and/or Station, including where the promotion is temporary for two months or more. Where this is not possible, a risk assessment should be carried out by the District Group Manager to ensure there is no risk of a negative workplace culture being reinforced, and the appropriate documentation sent to HR.

12. PRIOR TO ADVERTISING

Filling a Vacancy

When a post becomes vacant, the Head of Function, in consultation with the HR Team, will review the workforce plan. The Head of Function will then consult with the Corporate Leadership Team through submission of the appropriate information and seek approval to proceed with the recruitment to the vacancy.

Consideration will be given as to the flexibility of, or limitations to, the role with regards to the number of hours, working pattern and geographical mobility. Consideration will also be given as to whether the post is suitable to be taken up by an apprentice.

New Posts

All newly established posts require appropriate approval as per the [Constitution](#) before the post will be advertised.

Where a new post is identified, the manager, in consultation with HR will be responsible for drafting the job description and person specification and should refer to the relevant Job Evaluation Procedure regarding the process required for evaluation.

Portfolio Process

In order to ensure a ready supply of operational Station Managers, Watch Managers and Crew Managers for substantive and temporary roles, the Portfolio Development Pathway has been created.

The pathway provides support and guidance through regular feedback, reviews, skills audits and professional discussions.

Job Description

A job description is a statement of purpose and should list all the main duties and responsibilities of the post.

The Service uses a standard format for job descriptions.

Person Specification

The person specification identifies the genuine requirements of the job, including the relevant and appropriate qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience required to effectively undertake the post. How these requirements will be measured will be identified i.e., what stage of the selection process, application form, test, interview etc.

It is recognised that a person specification produced for job evaluation reflects the requirements of a fully competent post holder.

The qualification(s) required for the role may therefore be adjusted to recognise development expected to take place in post, however this should be identified within the person specification.

Criteria within the person specification should be relevant to the requirements of the job. The criteria should not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude any particular groups, as this may be viewed as indirect discrimination. The Service seeks to be inclusive and asks managers to carefully consider the skills, experience and qualifications that a post holder will require.

Using the person specification throughout the recruitment process enables the individuals involved to ensure that the most suitable applicant is appointed.

Role Maps

For operational roles, a Role Specific Training Outline sets out the skills, knowledge, understanding and competencies required. These are taken from the [NFCC National Operational Guidance Training Framework](#).

The Service uses a standard format for role maps.

Temporary Appointments

There will be occasions where it is necessary to provide temporary cover for a position within the Service. This may be on a short-term or long-term basis for a

variety of reasons, including to cover sickness, pending re-organisation, to cover maternity leave or fill a post with temporary funding.

If additional duties are available that may not form a temporary role themselves, advice will be taken from HR about how those duties will be treated, this policy may not apply in these circumstances.

Temporary vacancies will normally be advertised internally in the first instance. However, to meet the needs of the Service it may on occasion be necessary to approve a temporary promotion without a detailed process, examples of this could include the specialist nature of the skills and experience required or for operational reasons, these examples are not exhaustive. Where appropriate, consideration can be given to advertise a temporary post externally subject to the needs of the Service.

Temporary appointments in this context do not include “Acting Up”, within a shift or consecutive shifts for operational staff. Here eligibility would apply, reference can be made to [The Grey Book](#).

Agency staff should only be used to fill an urgent need and is generally undertaken where recruitment is on-going to appoint a candidate on a Service contract or where there is an immediate and short-term need. If a manager believes that agency staff may be required, they should contact the HR team for further discussion and for the necessary arrangements to take place.

All agencies used by the Service must be on the Service Framework. Any exceptions to this must be in consultation with HR Service Partner in the first instance.

Redeployment Register

Staff who are on the redeployment register will be notified by HR of all vacancies within HFRS. Where a redeployee expresses an interest in a vacancy they will be considered for the vacancy, prior to advertising, in accordance with the [Redeployment Policy](#).

Attracting Applicants

All vacancy advertisements will be consistent with the Service’s Core Code of Ethics and include an outline of the recruitment process.

All adverts should be succinct, appealing to prospective applicants and comply with the relevant legislation. All adverts will use inclusive language and avoid using words and sayings that exclude or discriminate against certain groups of people.

Vacancies will normally be advertised on the HFRS website, internally and externally using appropriate media channels as widely as necessary.

Agency workers working for HFRS are also eligible to apply for internal vacancies.

Where there is a large-scale recruitment campaign there may be a requirement to use an exclusively online approach. However, mixed approaches of application process will be used for the majority of vacancies.

A closing date for applications will be included in the advertisement, which is usually two weeks. The length of time that an advert is left open will vary depending on the nature of the job, the number of available opportunities and number of applications received.

13. SELECTION PROCESS

Each recruitment exercise will have a defined process developed before advertisement and all applicants will be informed of that process after shortlisting.

Shortlisting

The HR team will liaise and provide advice to managers about individual(s) who are on the redeployment register in line with the redeployment policy.

Shortlisting will be undertaken by the interview panel in most circumstances except where there are large scale recruitment campaigns that may be administered centrally.

Shortlisting will be based on the essential requirements of the post as identified in the person specification. Where this results in an unduly large number of candidates, desirable requirements should be considered to achieve a practical shortlist. The HR team can be contacted for advice on shortlisting, especially in the event of large number of applications, to ensure fairness and consistency in the process.

Where none of the applicants meet the minimum requirements laid down in the person specification, the post may require re-advertising. Advice must be sought from the HR team about this.

Shortlisting will be carried out in a way which ensures no personal details will be visible to the manager to minimise the risk of discrimination. Managers are asked to shortlist against the person specification only, to ensure that applications are considered in a consistent manner.

Where an applicant declares a disability on their monitoring form, the HR team will liaise with the recruiting manager to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are made where necessary, in line with The Equality Act 2010. As a disability confident employer, we are committed to offer disabled applicants an interview if they meet the minimum criteria.

Late applications will only be accepted where the short-listing process has not commenced and there are reasons acceptable to the Service why the application was not submitted in time. Advice must be sought by the HR team prior to accepting a late application.

Assessments

The assessment process will be agreed at the planning stage by the Recruiting Manager and HR team. The assessment methods used will vary depending on the position being advertised. A minimum of two managers will take part in assessing the outcomes.

The assessment methods used will be sufficiently robust and transparent to assess the suitability of eligible candidates to the vacant post, including how they demonstrate the Service's Core Code of Ethics.

Interviews

The purpose of an interview is to assess, often in conjunction with other methods, the extent to which the candidate meets the criteria contained in the person specification and to provide the interviewee with information about the job. An interview is a two-way process and will be conducted in line with the Service's Core Code of Ethics.

The composition of the panel will depend on the nature of the post being filled. There will be a minimum of two panel members, one of whom should have a clear working knowledge of the role and sufficient seniority for the role being recruited. It is best practice for a member of the HR team to be on the panel. Subject to availability, where a member of the HR team is not available, advice must be sought from a member of the HR team. Confidentiality is an important element to the recruitment and selection process, helping candidates perform to their best at interview.

It is important that any personal relationships or conflicts of interest between a candidate and panel member are disclosed at the start of the interview itself. Where possible, the relationship should also be disclosed to the HR team as soon as is practicable, so that an alternative interview panel can be considered.

Interview questions will be kept relevant to the job description and person specification and feature the Service's Core Code of Ethics as an underlying theme. The same questions will be asked of all applicants in that particular process. In line with the Equality Act 2010, panel members are not permitted to ask any health-related questions during the recruitment process, nor are they permitted to ask any questions that could be deemed to be potentially discriminatory relating to domestic and personal circumstances or protected characteristics.

All notes taken at interviews will be returned to HR following the interview. This information can be used to form the basis of feedback to candidates and to demonstrate that the panel have acted fairly and reasonably. All documentation relating to the individual can be provided to the applicant on request, in accordance with the UK GDPR.

Panel members are responsible for the information they record on the interview scoresheets and it is expected that only information that they would be comfortable disclosing at a later date should be recorded, such as the answer a candidate

provides to a question. All content and documentation should remain strictly confidential.

Interview feedback should be made available if requested by the applicant.

Community Interview Panel

The Community Interview Panel is made up of community members, who will have the opportunity to interview candidates for certain roles. The panel will take part in the interviewing of candidates using a selection of community focused interview questions in relation to the role and provide feedback and recommendations to the Service. The community interview panel will be supported by the Human Resources team.

Disabled Applicants and the Disability Confident Scheme

The Service will accept a candidate's statement that they are disabled within the terms of the Equality Act 2010 and as a Disability Confident employer, those who meet the essential criteria and who declare a disability will be interviewed in all circumstances. There may be occasions when further enquiries about a candidate's disability will be necessary, for example:

- To determine whether a reasonable adjustment is required at interview or for a selection test.
- When interviewing, to ask job related questions to ascertain whether a reasonable adjustment would be required to enable the candidate to do the job.

Reasonable Adjustments

All candidates being invited to assessment or interview are asked to advise if there are any reasonable adjustments required as part of the assessment and selection process. There is a requirement under The Equality Act 2010 to assess and consider appropriate adjustments to support candidates with disabilities, during the selection process. The HR team will provide support, advice and guidance on whether suggested adjustments are reasonable.

Should the candidate be successful, then further reasonable adjustments may be considered and required.

14. MAKING THE APPOINTMENT

After all stages of the selection process are complete and an evaluation of each candidate has been made, the successful applicant(s) will be identified.

The HR Team will then contact the successful and unsuccessful candidates with the outcome of their application, after the process has been fully completed.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified as soon as possible following the last interview/assessment. Candidates will generally be informed during

their interactions with the Service as to how long the whole assessment and selection method is scheduled for, for that particular recruitment.

Offer of Employment

All offers of employment are conditional and subject to the Employment Check Standards.

The Service only recruits individuals with a legal right to work in the UK. All offers of employment will be subject to the candidate providing the required original documents and/or the Service being able to carry out a check on the Home Office online [Right to Work checking service](#), confirming their right to do the work in question. The candidate must share their right to work details with the Service in advance to enable these checks to be undertaken. Failure to do so may result in an offer of employment being rescinded.

The requirement to provide evidence of the right to work in the UK applies to all new employee, regardless of their race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

All checks and clearances should be completed prior to the commencement of employment. This requirement will be set out in the conditional offer letter. In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for the candidate to commence employment with the Service pending receipt of some checks. Advice must be sought from the HR team to complete the appropriate risk assessment should this be necessary.

Checks and Clearances

All the following pre-appointment checks will be completed for all new appointments made, prior to the start date.

Driving Licence Check

Applicants who are required to drive must produce their valid Driving Licence.

Disclosure and Barring

All roles require a disclosure and barring check, in line with current legislation. Please refer to the [Disclosure and Barring Service Policy](#) for more detail. All employers are under a duty to share information about individuals who have harmed a child or vulnerable adult. Such disclosures should be made to the Head of HR and the Named Safeguarding Lead in the first instance.

Identity Check and right to work in the UK

Applicants should not progress through the assessment process until their identity is proven.

- These checks will be done as to satisfy the requirements outlined by the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) and the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

Applicants will be advised of the requirements for documentation and will be asked to bring the relevant ID to the interview/assessment.

Employment History and Reference Check

The Service asks every successful candidate to give their consent for it to obtain two written references. Any offer of employment will be conditional on these requirements being received to the satisfaction of the Service.

The Service will use a standard reference template which will be issued to the applicant's previous manager or, alternatively, the previous employer's HR Department.

When a reference is returned which requires further consideration it will be referred to the HR team, who will agree with the manager the appropriate course of action.

Occupational Health Clearance

When required, applicants will undertake a pre-appointment health check following advice from the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team and the HR team.

Professional Registration and Qualification Check

Where qualifications are required for the post, these will be verified by HR.

Outcome of Pre-Appointment Checks

Where the Service judges that there is insufficient evidence on which to base an offer of employment, any conditional offer which has been made will be withdrawn. This applies to any and all elements of the pre-appointment checking process.

Volunteers

Volunteer recruitment is subject to the same standards regarding checks and selection processes.

15. APPOINTMENT TO WORK

Written statement of terms and conditions of employment

This will be provided either as the employee starts work with the Service or before. Employees should sign and return one copy of the contract.

Induction

The induction of employees into the Service is the final part of the formal safer recruitment and retention process. Managers must complete a local induction programme with every new member of staff.

Starting Salary

The starting salary will, in the large majority of cases, be the minimum scale point on the pay band relevant to the post.

Where an existing employee is promoted, their pay will be set either at the minimum of the new pay band or, if this would result in no pay increase, the first pay point in the band which would deliver an increase in pay (by reference to basic pay plus any recruitment and retention premium, if applicable). On-Call and unsocial hours payments will not be taken into account when determining the relevant salary.

Where the manager feels there is a need to review a commencement salary, which may also apply to Agency Workers, they should contact the Head of HR for consideration prior to offer and agreement with the applicant.

Withdrawing a Conditional Offer of Employment

If it becomes clear at any stage during the recruitment process that the applicant may have provided incorrect or inaccurate information on their application form, then the following steps should be taken:

- The concerns should be highlighted to the applicant and they should be given the opportunity to explain the apparent inconsistencies. This will be completed by the line manager and a representative from HR.
- Attempts should be made to establish whether or not the applicant deliberately misled the Service, knowingly withheld information or provided false information. If there is a reasonable belief and/or on the balance of probability, that this is the case, the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

HR will be responsible for the written withdrawal of the offer of employment.

Complaints

Complaints from external applicants relating to the safer recruitment process should follow the complaints process. Internal applicants should follow the grievance procedure. Grievances will not be accepted if they relate to the Service's policy and processes where formal consultation on the policy or process has already taken place.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The HR team will monitor the safer recruitment and selection process in relation to equality and inclusion at all stages of application, short listing and appointment. Information will be gained from the completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring; part of the application which requests information on gender, ethnic origin, religion, belief, sexual orientation and disability.

**For further information / guidance regarding this document please contact
Human Resources**