

Guidance for Applicants

Thank you for showing an interest in working for Wigan Council.

Please find below, some useful hints and tips to assist you when completing your application form; please read them carefully, your application form is an important factor when recruiting managers are deciding who to select for interview.

- Ensure that you complete all sections of the application form before it is submitted
- Always review the job description and person specification for the post before you complete the application form.
- Use the job description and person specification to tailor your application specifically to the post you are applying for.
- Use the application form to tell us what **you** want us to know, confirming why **you** should be interviewed for the post.
- Always complete a separate form when applying for different posts – do not use the same application form time and time again, we would expect your responses to be different depending on the post you are applying for, due to the different skill and competency requirements.
- If the advert states the interview date for the post, ensure you keep this date free and advise us of any leave that might coincide with the dates – please note that we cannot guarantee that alternative dates will be provided if you are unavailable on the interview date.

****Remember to submit your application form before the closing date – if you submit it after the closing date it will not be accepted****

Person Specification – Essential and Desirable Criteria

When reviewing the person specification for the post you are interested in, you will notice that against each criteria there is an essential and desirable field.

Those criteria that are marked essential, are the criteria that must be met in order to fulfil the requirements of the role; short listing is based on the essential criteria and if you cannot meet the essential criteria, it is unlikely you will be selected to attend an interview.

The desirable criteria is not necessarily required to fulfil the requirements of the role, however, it is advantageous if you can meet all the essential criteria and some of the desirable criteria; when recruiting managers short list applications, they will refer to the desirable criteria if all applicants meet the essential criteria and there are still too many to interview.

Below are some more detailed guidance notes for each aspect of the application form:

Personal Details

Personal details are NOT viewed by the recruiting manager – if you are successful in obtaining a position with us, these details will form part of your personal record.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

This information is for the benefit of People Services and will NOT be seen by the recruiting manager; it is important that you complete these details as it gives us the opportunity to monitor the status of our workforce and provide statistical information on the applicants for our vacancies.

Your co-operation in providing this information is greatly appreciated.

Other Applicant Details

We must be made aware of any relations you may have to a Councillor, Governor or Senior Officer, if you fail to declare this, you could jeopardise your employment if you are offered a position with us.

It is important that you are open and honest with us – we aim to be a high performing Council with low levels of sickness absence therefore we feel it is important to review your sickness record – this will not prejudice your application.

We appreciate that sickness levels may be affected due to pregnancy and/or disability, which is why we do NOT ask you to provide details of any sickness absences in connection with pregnancy or disability.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, some convictions become 'spent' after a certain period of time, however, there are some exceptions.

All applicants should therefore complete the section on previous criminal convictions so that appropriate checks can be made.

Disability

Wigan Council is positive about disability and has been awarded the 'Two Ticks Disability Symbol' by Job Centre Plus.

It is Wigan Council protocol that all disabled applicants who meet all the essential criteria for a post are guaranteed to be shortlisted for the recruitment process.

If you are disabled, complete the appropriate field on the application form and specify any arrangements or adjustments that you would require at the recruitment stage.

Employment History

This section must include details of all previous jobs you have had and your current job.

It is important not to have any gaps in your employment history, or if you have any gaps, you should explain what you did during that period.

If you have been out of work for a while, or have never worked before, you should include details of any type of work experience you may have had either through school/college, charity, social or community activities.

Education and Training

It is important to include all your qualifications as this proves your suitability for the post you are applying for, in particular, you must ensure that the qualifications requested on the person specification are included in your form.

You only need to include details of membership to professional bodies if it is relevant to the post.

Take the opportunity to tell us about any other training you have undertaken which would assist you in fulfilling the duties of the post you are applying for; this does not necessarily mean training within your previous jobs, it could be training you have undertaken whilst at school/college or as part of your voluntary work - if it is relevant to the post, we want to know about it.

Supporting Information

This is one of the most important parts of the application form. You should use this section to sell yourself and demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the person specification; it is also your opportunity to include anything relevant to the post which has not been included within other aspects of the application form.

When structuring your response, it is effective to mirror the structure of the person specification, e.g.

Experience

Talk about all your relevant experience, ensuring that you meet the requirements outlined under the experience section of the person specification.

It is useful to provide examples to support what you say, as this confirms that you have the experience required.

Training and Qualifications

Confirm that you have the training and qualifications required for the post, what date you achieved the qualification(s) and what grade you obtained (if applicable).

Provide examples of how the training and/or qualifications has impacted on your skills and competencies and how these skills are transferrable to the post you are applying for.

Knowledge and Understanding

This is your chance to demonstrate what you know.

Confirm that you know and understand what is requested in the person specification. For example, if the person specification states that you require a knowledge and understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act a good response would be:

“throughout my current role I have gained a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act. Working in a HR environment I am familiar with advising managers of the legislation and I understand that employers are expected to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees”

The last part of the sentence shows how you understand the legislation and you are demonstrating that you know how it affects disabled employees and employers.

Personal Skills, Abilities and Competencies

For each skill, ability or competency outlined in the person specification, you should use workplace examples to support how you meet the criteria.

It is extremely important to provide examples as this supports what you are saying.

Physical Skills

This may not always be a requirement, but where it is, you should show how you have the physical skills required for the post.

Important point:

****always remember to specify your responsibilities rather than those of the section/department or organisation you are referring to****

It may also be useful to refer to the ‘STAR’ method when incorporating examples into your application; this describes the situation, task, action and result, for example:

Situation - Preparing a presentation

Task - Research all information required for the topic area and create the presentation

Action - Conducting the presentation

Result - A thorough and relevant presentation delivered to the group

References

If you are currently working or have previously worked, your first referee **must** be your current or most recent employer.

If you have not been employed before, you should provide the name of someone who will be able to comment on your skills, abilities and competencies, such as a teacher or lecturer; it must NOT be someone who is a friend or relative.

References will be taken up prior to interview if you are successfully shortlisted for the post, unless you have specified that references cannot be taken up immediately.

Data Protection

In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, in signing the declaration on the application form, you agree to us disclosing information such as your name to the Job Centre and New Deal participants for statistical purposes – your information will NOT be retained or processed for any other purpose.

In line with our policies and procedures, following the recruitment process, the hard copy data will be kept for 6 months and the computerised record of these details kept for 18 months.

We have a duty to protect public funds, therefore we may use this information to prevent and detect fraud. We may also share this information, for the same purposes, with other organisations that handle public funds.

By signing the declaration on the application form you are agreeing to all of the above.