



Guidance Notes for Completing Application Form

Guidance

Your application plays an important part in all stages of the selection process: it is used to determine whether or not you will be short listed for interview and acts as a basis for the interview itself. Before you complete the application form you should:

- Study the job description and person specification as they list the qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required to do the job
- Review your own skills and experience.
- Ask yourself if you possess the essential attributes and whether you can meet the job and person criteria.
- Prepare a rough draft before filling in the form, this helps to clarify your ideas, structure your response and avoid mistakes.
- Certain competencies are applicable to the role, you should refer to the person specification and read the competencies carefully and provide clear examples of your past experience which relates specifically to the competencies, job description and person specification. Examples can be taken from any aspect of your life which you consider to be relevant i.e. current or past work experience, home or school life. For each example please state what you did, how you did it and what the outcome/results were.
- If you are disabled you may wish to claim a guaranteed interview. To be eligible for a guaranteed interview, you must meet the essential criteria as stated in the person specification. Only if you meet the essential criteria for the post as stated in the person specification will you be guaranteed an interview.
- If you require help completing your application form please contact a member of the HR team on 0151 510 5151
- Use positive statements about yourself, e.g. by saying “I have.....” rather than “my last employer has.....”
- Make meaningful statements. For example, if you are required to write about your commitment to equal opportunities give real life examples from your own experience.
- Make sure that you have said something to cover each of the points on the competency list, some of your examples maybe quite brief; however, you should be prepared that the interviewer may question you on any one of the competencies listed. Some applicants find it helpful to number their points to match the criteria, while others find this



inhibiting – how you structure your application is up to you however, please remember it has to be relevant.

Completing the Form

- Complete the application form neatly and clearly.
- Complete the application form accurately. Ensure that dates are correct.
- If you cannot fit in all of the information in on the form use extra sheets, making sure they are clearly marked and numbered. We ask you not to use more than one extra sheet **(two sides)**.
- Make it clear what your present or past jobs have been. We are also interested in experience gained in voluntary work or whilst working at home.

Procedure after your application is submitted

After the closing date, the Human Resources Department will forward all application forms to the recruiting manager. Short listing usually takes place within two weeks following the closing date for applications. A panel of at least two people will select the shortlist for interview. The short listing is based on your application form and additional information provided in support of the competencies for the role and person specification. Those applicants who most closely meet the criteria will be selected for interview.

The short listed candidates will be contacted and asked to attend an interview and will be advised of any special arrangements such as tests or presentations prior to the interview day. Candidates will normally be advised of feedback as soon as is practicable after the interview.

Preparation for Interview

After completing your application form along with the additional information, it is time to start thinking about a potential interview. The essential ingredients for a successful interview are to ensure that you research the post and to be aware of the benefits you can bring to the organisation. If you are invited to attend an interview spend some time reviewing your skills, knowledge and experience – it is essential that you prepare for your interview.

Assessment Methods

As part of the selection process for some posts the Trust may choose assessment exercises as well as interviewing candidates. The exercises will be relevant and appropriate to the post in question and all shortlisted candidates for the post will sit the same tests. The purpose of using



additional assessment methods is so that more information can be obtained about the abilities of each candidate. It also offers candidates the opportunity to display their skills in a wider variety of ways than an interview alone. The range of exercises may include psychometric tests and work related exercises such as presentations, in-tray exercises etc. In these situations further guidance will be given to all candidates.

Competency Based Interviews

Competencies are an attribute described in terms of skills and behaviours that are key to effective performance within a job.

The Trust has compiled a list of assessment competencies that we believe are key to the success of the Trust. We will interview against these competencies, as they are applicable across a range of jobs. Unlike specialist technical skills that are job specific, competencies provide a common language for describing performance. Competency based interviews facilitate a fair and valid selection process. Each post has its own set of competencies and you should assess your skills and abilities against those indicated for that particular post.

Using your past experience is a predictor on how you are likely to behave in the future. Your responses to the competency based questions will give you the opportunity to reflect upon your achievements and experience to date and in return provide reliable data about your ability in certain key areas.

During the interview you will be told by the interviewer which competency you are being questioned against and how they are defined e.g. *Customer Focus the – Definition of Customer focus - is the commitment to putting customers first and the ability to deliver a consistently high quality service. Customers are both internal (i.e. colleagues) and external (i.e. the community, service users, business partners and other organisations). Why is it important? All employees must demonstrate a full understanding of customer needs and expectations to enable the effective delivery and development of appropriate quality services which exceed customer expectations.*

With each competency you will be asked to describe a recent situation that demonstrates your past experience in this area. As a guide you should:

- **Listen carefully to the question and choose a relevant example from your own experience.**
 - The example should preferably be from the last six months but definitely not older than a few years.
 - Not every example has to be work related.

- **Give an overview of the situation**
 - How did it arise?
 - What were the key stages?



- What was delivered?
- **Describe your own contribution**
 - Be sure to be specific as to your own actions, where appropriate avoid talking about “we”.
- **Discuss the Results**
 - Were the objectives achieved?
 - What were the impacts of your own contribution?
 - What did you learn?

Please note that you should be prepared to answer questions in respect of the technical aspects of the role – i.e. if you have applied for a position within ICT you should expect to answer questions designed to assess your knowledge of various IT systems / applications.

Monitoring Information (applicable to external candidates only)

Please complete the monitoring information form as it helps the Trust to determine whether our Equal Opportunities policy is working with regard to recruitment. This is not part of your application, but helps us in developing our approach to equal opportunities.

Data Protection Act

The information you give us on this form may be processed by computer, but will be used for recruitment and selection purposes only. If your application is successful and you commence employment with Halton Housing Trust some of the information will be put onto our HR system. This information is kept in the strictest of confidence at all times.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

If you apply for a post that is subject to Disclosure you must disclose all convictions and cautions which for other purposes are “spent” under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Further information about Criminal Record Bureau can be found on their website [www. disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

Complaints

We endeavour to ensure that every stage of our recruitment process is fair and properly carried out. We hope that you feel that you have been treated fairly, even if you are not successful in your application.



If you are successful / unsuccessful and feel that feedback on your application and / or interview would be helpful, please contact the Human Resources Department who will arrange for this to be given to you.

Equality & Diversity

Halton Housing Trust (the Trust) recognises that equality and diversity issues are just as relevant to the staff it employs, as they are to the customers who receive its services. It has therefore developed a separate Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy, which runs along side its Equality and Diversity in Service Delivery Policy.

The aims of the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policies are to:

- Identify and eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity in all the Trust's activities;
- Provide practical and responsive services to victims of discrimination;
- Manage diversity in people through recognising and encouraging the differences between them;
- Recognise that everyone is entitled to be treated with openness, integrity and respect;
- Ensure that full records are kept to monitor the impact of this policy.

The Trust will take action to eliminate discrimination. This will include the following:

Recruitment

- All vacancies will be advertised in a way that does not discourage traditionally disadvantaged groups from applying for posts.
- When recruiting staff, specific qualifications or experience will be called for only where they are essential for the effective performance of the job.
- All staff involved in the selection and recruitment process will be trained to ensure that they understand the equal opportunities policy. More than one person will always be involved in the selection interview. Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants will be recorded.
- Any applicant with disabilities who meets the minimum requirements for a suitable job will be interviewed.
- A record of all employees' gender, ethnicity and disability details will be kept in order to ensure the effective operation of this policy (and for no other purpose). Where necessary, employees will be able to check / correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information is restricted to relevant Line and Senior Managers only. Anonymous statistical information will be produced for wider management purposes. This will allow action to be taken where the profile does not reflect progress towards the objective of ensuring the workforce reflects the composition of the population it is responsible for.



Our Vision:

Deliver High Quality and Excellent Services – For All

Our Mission:

Provide high quality housing services with a social conscience

Our Values:

- People:
 - Listen and involve
 - Ensure respect for all
 - Act with honesty, trust and openness
 - Embrace challenge and strive for excellence
 - Take ownership and responsibility
 - Have fun and enjoy our work

- Service:
 - Value people and diversity through understanding and demonstrate through action.
 - Ensure quality of access and opportunity across all we do
 - Deliver value for money through a business culture
 - Care for our environment
 - Invest in and build communities
 - Value the importance of community networks

Our Corporate Themes:

- Delivering our Promises
- Developing our People
- Developing our Business and Innovation
- Putting Customers First
- Improving our Communication and Information

