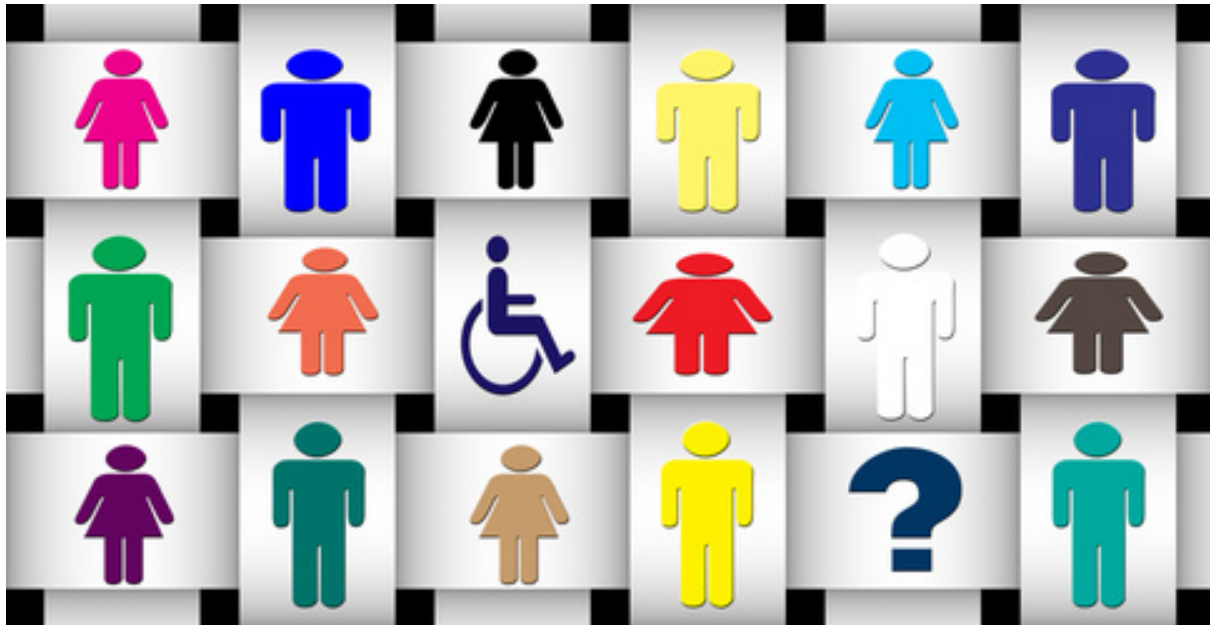


# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Recruitment and Selection Process**

**Review by Derbyshire County Council -  
Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People**



**Final Report of the Review Working Group**

**3 September 2014**

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## Acknowledgements –

The Chair and Members of the review working group would like to thank the Members and Officers of Derbyshire County Council who have contributed to this review:-

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# 1. Introduction

Councillor Diane Charles, Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny – People Committee and Chair of the Review Working Group, introduces this report;

“Ensuring there is equality, diversity and inclusion in all Derbyshire County Council’s services is vital. Equally it is important that we are an employer who considers equality, inclusion and diversity in all our policies, procedures and working practices.

This review is a result of a desire to continually improve our equality, diversity and inclusion work. Following discussions with service users and staff, particularly from minority groups, issues were raised with regard to people’s experiences of the recruitment and selection process. It was therefore agreed by the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People, to undertake a review to understand these issues in detail.

This review is also in the context of the Council having to save £157m by 2018 and potential workforce reductions. However, the Authority and its employees will still be delivering vital services to the residents of Derbyshire.

Members and officers of Improvement and Scrutiny, Policy and Research and Human Resources as well as representatives of our Employee Panel and Employee Networks, have worked together to bring this review to a conclusion and I would like to thank all those involved for their assistance and contributions.”



Councillor Diane Charles

Chair, Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People

## **2. Executive Summary**

The review has found good working practices with regard to how the Authority incorporates equality, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and selection process.

This includes positive experiences for employees across different groups who used the Authority's external job website, which was found to be accessible with a high level of awareness amongst job seekers and usability of the site. Research from this review also found there was satisfaction with some of the Authority's processes, correspondence and interviewing techniques.

The Authority is responding the financial pressures of having to save £157m by 2018 and the potential for workforce reductions. Initiatives are being developed to ensure employees are matched to relevant available posts and those at risk are given the opportunity to remain with the Authority.

The way the Authority has used media advertising for attracting applicants to posts has changed over the last ten years. This has been, in part, due to the development of the internet and the subsequent decline in the use of print media. Costs to the Authority of job advertising have decreased dramatically from over £1m to just over £58,000 in 2012/13.

The review has also found areas of potential development in the Authority's work on equality, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and selection process.

The internal job website and associated communication was found not to be working as well as the external jobs website. The review found a lower level of awareness and satisfaction than the external site. Employees across different groups cited dissatisfaction with accessibility and usability. In the context of the new initiatives to help existing employees to be matched to appropriate posts, it is vital that there is the appropriate quality of internal communication. The research also found there could be scope to attract people from different backgrounds through targeted advertising, where this is appropriate and cost effective.

The review also found that, although robust, there was some lengthy timescales to the processes involved in recruitment. This was focused on the time between a recruit's interview and employment start. Such timescales can

cause issues in the delivery of service. However, the review also found that the Authority is responding to these issues already, through changes to some systems that will speed up certain checks.

Although there was general satisfaction over how interviews take place, the findings from the employee research could contribute to the development of recruitment and selection guidance and policies. This should include a review of how to incorporate a more 'conversational' style to how interviews are undertaken, ensuring an applicant's personal attributes can be highlighted.

The review found findings, such as the above, formed potential barriers to employment in certain cases. The language which the Authority uses was also seen as a barrier. The perception being it is overly complicated, difficult for certain groups to fully comprehend and gives rise to the perception that in some instances, posts are written with someone specific in mind.

The review also found low levels of declaration in monitoring of certain equality groups. Ensuring the Authority has robust data to make valid and informed decisions is vital to ensure there is equality of opportunity. Analysis of job applications showed some levels of disproportionality by different equality groups from those who applied to those appointed.

The working group Members has made the following recommendations which the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People is asked to accept and refer to Cabinet for approval and implementation of the proposals;

1. Human Resources (HR) work with appropriate partners to develop accessibility to the way internal job vacancies are advertised and the use of advertising tools (for example, social media and media websites) for jobs both internally and externally.
2. HR review and improve the performance of the pre-employment function, particularly lead times between interview and start of employment.
3. HR implement a policy of having a named contact on all HR Shared Service correspondence where this is appropriate.
4. HR review the value of having an approach of a conversational style, based on attitudinal as well as pure technical ability when developing

their recruitment and selection policies and guidance, and takes into account the review's findings from discussions with equality groups.

5. HR review job descriptions and job profiles and ensure they are written in plain English and abide by the Authority's good writing practices.
6. HR consult with the Disability Employment Team and Disability Network to
  - a. understand what further improvements can be made to County Hall and other buildings owned by the Authority
  - b. review processes that are in place to support employees capability to work, and
  - c. review the future developments of job carving for those with learning disabilities as appropriate.
7. HR extend the current good practice of apprenticeships and work experience to looked after children, including training and developing Care and Support Workers to support looked after children in taking up such opportunities.
8. HR to undertake a review of the tools used when advertising for recruitment and feed recommendations into the communications and engagement strategy currently being developed.
9. HR to undertake a benchmarking study of non-declaration rates by equality groups from other Councils and any associated best practice.
10. The findings from this review are taken into account in the consultation on the development of the Internal Jobs Market, including with the Employee Panel.

The Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People will monitor the implementation of these recommendations as and when appropriate.

### 3. Background to the Review

In July 2013, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny – People Committee discussed a review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Derbyshire County Council with the Leader of the Council in line with the Manifesto and anticipated Council Plan. This encompassed different lines of inquiry, and was prioritised by two reviews – *recruitment and selection* and *decision making*.

For the recruitment and selection inquiry, it was agreed that a working group be formed to understand the experiences of new recruits in the employment process. The working group comprises Councillors Charles, Frudd, Birkin and Lewis. Initial working group meetings were held with HR officers and the Senior Policy Officer – Equalities to develop specific lines of inquiry, which were:

- New recruits experience of recruitment and selection
- Recruitment and selection guidance and procedures
- Learning and development of managers in recruitment and selection
- Equality analysis of job applications
- Job adverts and media advertising
- Job initiatives

This review, with detailed research by members of the working group, has given rise to a range of recommendations to Cabinet. This will ensure that the Council is meeting its legal obligations and duties as a Service Provider and an Employer. The following chapters take each line of inquiry in turn, with the relevant research findings and recommendations.

## 4. Initial Research

The working group had preliminary meetings with officers from Human Resources and Policy and Research, including the Director of Human Resources. From these meetings, the scope and methodology of research was developed. Lines of inquiry were agreed, to ensure that the review would add value to the current knowledge of the Authority as well as avoiding duplication with existing departmental work.

It became apparent through discussions that the review would generate new research regarding employee's experiences of the recruitment and selection process. Additionally, the review would take existing information that the Authority held on job applications, media advertising and job adverts. Finally, the review would take evidence from officers on the work developing the Authority's policies and procedures, managers training and development and young people recruitment and selection. The following sub-sections detail the initial research and approaches agreed for each line of inquiry:

### 4.1 Research into people's experience of recruitment and selection

Following a meeting with the Director of Human Resources and the HR Service Partner, it was agreed to use the existing Employee Panel to obtain new recruits' experience of the recruitment and selection process. This is a group of 400 employees who are representative of the Council. The Panel has been used numerous times by HR to ascertain and monitor staff's views on various issues. As such, HR Officers are well skilled and experienced in running research events with the Panel.

The research targeted employees of the network who have been recruited into a new job (both internal transfer and from externally into the Council) in the last five years. A research event was held with 15 Employee Panel Members, with 3 facilitators. Additionally, there was a separate focus group run with representatives from the Council's Employee Networks (6 members).

Groups discussed their experiences of the recruitment process, with facilitators taking notes, which formed the qualitative insights into their feelings and experiences.



#### 4.2 Recruitment and selection guidance and procedures

Following a meeting with the HR Consultant, the working group was updated on the draft recruitment and selection procedure and guidance that HR is currently working on. The current procedure and guidance is over 10 years old and requires updating to reflect modern ways of working. For example, it pre-dates the Shared Services Centre.

#### 4.3 Learning and development of managers in recruitment and selection

Following a meeting with the Senior HR Consultant, it was agreed to obtain evidence of what the Authority is doing on training and developing managers in the recruitment and selection process. The line of inquiry focused on the equality and diversity elements of the service provided by HR. Written evidence was received from the Senior HR Consultant.

#### 4.4 Equality analysis of job applications

After discussions with the Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, and agreement with the Director for HR, an analysis of the Council's job applications by the different equality groups was carried out. The data focuses on the applications, shortlisting and appointments by candidates from different equality groups from 2010-2014.

Although the data is published quarterly on the Authority's Intranet, it was agreed by the working group and officers that it would be a useful undertaking to analyse the numbers in greater depth. This included looking at full year data (as appose to the published quarterly data) and over 4 years to ascertain trends.

#### 4.4 Job adverts and media advertising

Following discussions with HR Service Partner, it was agreed that an analysis of the Council's media spend on external job advertising was conducted.

Data provided by HR showed that during 2012/13, the Council spent £58k on advertising 46 posts in the media. All posts were also advertised on the Council's website and associated publications.

#### 4.5 Job initiatives

Following a meeting with the HR Consultant, it was agreed to obtain evidence of what the Authority is doing on job initiatives. The lines of inquiry focused on how the Authority recruits and selects young people. Written evidence was received from the Senior HR Consultant on the progress made with apprenticeships.

Additionally, through discussions with the HR Consultant, the working group was introduced to the Internal Jobs Market policy. This is still in development by the Authority.

The following pages detail the findings from the research, analysis and discussions by the different lines of inquiry, together with recommendations, where appropriate.

## **5. New recruits experiences of recruitment and selection**

The working group held two consultation events in May with members of the Employee Panel and Network. The research focused on recent recruit's experience of the recruitment and selection process who have been appointed through internal or external recruitment processes within the last few years.

Out of 400 panel members, who were demographically representative of the Council, 90 members had either changed jobs internally or been recruited externally in the last 4 years. These 90 members were contacted to request their attendance at Panel. In all, 15 Panel members from the Employee Panel attended the research event. Facilitators were selected and trained prior to the event on the questions and format of the day. In addition, another event was held with 6 members of the Employee Network, who represented minority groups.

The aim of each event was for groups to discuss their experiences of the recruitment process, with facilitators taking notes, to create qualitative feedback. The event first looked at the recruitment process, and covered the following:

- Advertising – e.g. how did employees hear about most recent job?
- Internal processes – e.g. what positive / negative experiences were there?
- Correspondence – e.g. how satisfactory was the information received?

The second part of the event considered the selection process, and covered the following:

- Interview – e.g. what was employees' experience of the interview process?
- Selection techniques – e.g. what was effectiveness of selection method?
- Barriers – e.g. what barriers were there to applying?

A copy of all the comments that were made in the two research events can be found at Appendix A.

## 5.1 Main findings

The research provided some commonalities in the experience of employees in the recruitment and selection process. These were both positive and negative. The bullet points below summaries the key themes of the research findings:

- The external job website works well
- The internal job website via DNet accessibility should be developed
- The recruitment process works well overall, especially correspondence information and for external recruitments
- However, the process does take too long, especially for internal staff moving between Council jobs
- The use of tests as a selection method works well to see an applicant's suitability for the job
- However, consideration must be taking of people's learning abilities when conducting tests (for example, dyslexia) and interviews
- The language used in adverts and job information is too complicated and can create a barrier to applying
- The Authority struggles to attract and recruit younger people
- There are still issues with accessibility to County Hall and other buildings, especially for those with a disability.

The following subsection details the main findings from the qualitative research. The working group notes that findings are only presented where there was commonality in experiences. This is to ensure there is robustness and confidence in the proportionality of the findings. A specific issue raised through a single comment was not taken into consideration when developing the main findings. However, all comments have been noted (as per Appendix A).

## 5.2 Advertising

There were numerous positive experiences of how jobs are advertised by the Authority, the research found. The external jobs website was found to work

very well. This included the job alerts facility, and the high level of awareness of the site. Additionally, there were positive experiences of employees only having to fill in their details once, and the website saving their information. The research also showed that all people at the events either used the external or internal sites for searching job vacancies. A suggestion from both research events was that the external website should be able to extend on its current excellent search options to include the ability to filter jobs between school and non-school.

However, the research also highlighted some negative experiences around the internal job site (on DNet). The main area of concern was the low level of awareness of new jobs that go on the site, due to a lack of publicity. Employee's cited that there was no alert facility when new jobs were posted and some felt that had 'missed out' as they had no knowledge of the post being advertised on the internal site. Employees also highlighted that they only became aware of new posts by 'word of mouth'.

The working group notes that the Authority is looking to advertise a greater percentage of posts for internal staff only and ensure redeployment where it is possible. Therefore it is important the internal jobs website delivers a service for staff which ensures maximum awareness and knowledge of current vacancies, and has the similar functions as the external website. The working group also notes the feedback from employees that the Authority continues to accept applications in paper format as well as on-line. This will ensure there continues to be equality of opportunity for all potential applicants.

The research also suggests there is an opportunity to advertise more widely to attract applicants from different backgrounds. This includes in the press which is aimed at people who consider they have disability and to LGBT groups. Suggestions also included advertising in children centres, libraries and schools. Finally, the use of social media was encouraged by employees when advertising for jobs. This was felt to be important to ensure the Authority is reaching out to as many different people as possible. However, employees also commented on the costs involved in some of these activities.

**The working group recommends that Human Resources (HR) work with appropriate partners to develop accessibility to the way internal job vacancies are advertised and the use of advertising tools (for example, social media and media websites) for jobs both internally and externally.**

### 5.3 Internal processes and correspondence

The research showed positive experiences of the processes involved in recruitment. This was especially so of external recruitment. The quality of correspondence was also well received, including the information provided at the interview stage. However, the working group noted that a named contact on correspondence would be preferred.

However, one of the most common themes of all the research was the lengthy processes involved in recruitment. This was especially so of internal staff who have obtained a new internal post. The pre-employment part of the process was highlighted as the main reason for extended timescales. The research showed that in some instances there was a gap of over 3 months between successful interview and starting in post. It was noted that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and medicals added time onto the process.

The working group also notes that these delays can have implications for seasonal and short term contract jobs, and therefore Council services. The research highlights instances where there were lengthy (3 months plus) timescales between interview and receiving the necessary checks to start employment. This had resulted in successful candidates unwilling to wait for employment and moving onto other jobs. The working group notes that HR is taking action to address these issues through the introduction of the eBulk system. The working group also notes that the research highlighted that the proposal for the Internal Jobs Market (detailed more in section 10) that it would speed up the process of recruitment for managers.

**The working group recommends that HR reviews the performance of the pre-employment function, particularly lead times between interview and start of employment. The working group also recommends that a named contact is included on all HR Shared Service correspondence where this is appropriate.**

### 5.4 Interview and selection techniques

The research showed positive experiences of the interview process. In particular, employees noted interviewers being kind and considerate. The working group notes the research finding that interview questions should cover things about the person not just technical things about the job. Employees felt that the interview should be constructed to allow the applicants personal attributes to be shown, which cannot be taught on the job. This

would include general attitude, approach to work and their interpersonal skills. This could be done through a more conversational approach to interviews. Employees noted that Council policies and procedures could be learnt whilst in the job. The working group further noted that where there were interview panels, they should be balanced wherever possible to reflect the protected characteristics.

The research showed positive experiences of the methods used in the selection process. Tests have been used across a wide range of jobs and mostly the test suited the type of job it was (i.e. practical and tested skills and experiences required on a day to day basis). The research also showed that tests are important to get to see the overall picture of someone's suitability. Assessment centres were discussed, with employees saying that they are varying experiences from positive to negative.

**The working group recommends that HR develop an approach of a conversational style, based on attitudinal as well as pure technical ability when developing their recruitment and selection policies and guidance.**

## 5.5 Barriers

The research highlighted areas which could be conceived as potential barriers to employment for different groups. This covered both parts of the recruitment and selection process.

The working group notes that the research showed there were some misconceptions of how equality, diversity and inclusion are managed in the recruitment and selection process. Some employees thought there were quotas for people from specific groups that the Council has to meet - this isn't the case.

One of the strongest themes of the research was the complicated language that is used on job adverts, job descriptions and person profiles. Employees felt that the job adverts are too wordy and need simplifying, as currently it could potentially put people off applying. Employees also felt the job descriptions/role profiles can be very detailed and put some people off and that sometimes jobs request experience or qualifications which aren't always necessary. The working group also note the research finding that adverts sometimes talk about people needing to already have knowledge of internal processes i.e. equal opportunities or finance systems. The research also

noted that people with difficulties in learning may have barriers to employment. Employees felt that, in particular, people with dyslexia would struggle with language used by the Authority in the recruitment and selection process. This included multiple part questions in interviews.

**The working group recommends that HR review job descriptions and job profiles and ensure they are written in plain English and abide by the Authority's good writing practices.**

A further perceived barrier to employment taken from the research was the accessibility of County Hall and other Council buildings for disabled people. Employees also mentioned that parking is not good at County Hall, especially for those who consider themselves to be disabled. The working group note the improvements already made to County Hall through its Changing Places project and other works, including lifts and powered assisted doors. Additionally, the working group note the work the Authority carries out to provide reasonable adjustments to ensure people have the support needed to carry out their roles. Also, the capability procedure and the restoring of the Elected Member appeal process. However, the working group note that the Authority must continue to ensure there are rigorous processes in place, in the context of changing roles and ways of working. For example, when employees are moved offices, reasonable adjustments are carried over and are applied to their new office location.

**The working group recommends that HR consult with the Disability Employment Team and Disability Network to understand what further improvements can be made to County Hall and other Authority buildings and the processes that are in place to support employees capability to work.**

The research from the Employee Panel and Network groups also highlighted potential barriers in how the Authority presents itself when targeting people for recruitment. The working group notes the findings which highlighted the perception of stereotypes sometimes being used when advertising, for example men fixing roads or an elderly lady on school crossing patrol.

**The working group recommends that HR undertake a review of tools used when advertising for recruitment and feed recommendations into the communications and engagement strategy currently being developed.**



## **6. Recruitment and selection guidance and procedures**

The Council ensures it has the people, skills and knowledge in place to deliver excellent services to improve life for local people. There is a current policy of using existing staff where it can and recruiting from outside in other circumstances, in such a way that resourcing is done in the most cost effective way possible.

Under Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, every appointment of a person to employment with local Authority must be made on merit.

Jobs are advertised openly so that we widen the field of applicants and promote equality of opportunity. This does not mean that every job is advertised externally, as there are often circumstances where it is in the Council's, and employees, best interests to recruit internally. It does mean that all roles are offered to as wide an audience as possible to recruit and retain the most highly skilled workforce possible.

Most recent printed policy and guidance on recruitment and selection dates from December 2001- sound basis but very outdated now - e.g. predates Shared Services Centre (HR) and not practical for Managers to use.

HR is currently drafting the content, which will include a short policy section and manageable chunks of guidance information (e.g. for managers) which can be accessed via the Council's Intranet. There will be a consultation exercise with appropriate committees in the near future, once the draft has been completed. The working group note that the findings from this review will aid in this consultation process.

A recent piece of work has looked at how the Authority currently approaches procedures and has recommended short and medium terms process changes. This includes measures to tighten up on timescales for recruitment procedures by both the Shared Service Centre and managers. This is also includes putting the interview date into the job advert, and automatic reminders to meet target dates. Additionally, this also includes some policy changes, for example relaxing reference requests for certain candidates.

The working group's discussions with representatives of minority groups highlighted the following with regard to equality and diversity issues:

- Shorter application form for jobs as deemed appropriate
- Request for Curriculum Vitae where deemed appropriate instead of application form (for example for young people entering employment)
- Online or paper applications
- Two ticks commitment for disabled applicants, reasonable adjustments at interview etc
- Monitoring sheets collected for each application and separated before sight of recruiting manager
- Adherence to Equality Act 2010 – e.g. references, health issues etc only considered for preferred candidate
- Equalities issues covered in R&S training and managers encouraged to recruit for ability and attitude as much as skills and experience
- Strenuous efforts made by Occupational Health services and line managers to keep those who develop disabilities in work, via reasonable adjustments
- Springboard programme to encourage women in junior roles to progress
- Not just REGARDS group or 9 protected characteristics but any underrepresented group
- Tension between recruiting the best for the job and wishing to give disabled and other minority groups increased opportunities
- Difficulties of taking on many new people/changing the composition of our workforce in a climate of service constriction and job cuts.

**The working group recommend that HR take into account the working group discussions with equality groups as above, as part of the consultation on the recruitment and selection policies and guidance. This to be combined with recommendation 4 as listed in the executive summary.**

With large scale job cuts to be made in the next four years, the Authority approach to resourcing will change. The concept of an Internal Jobs Market (IJM) is intended to be implemented – this will maximise the possibility of using our existing workforce to meet future service needs. The Internal Jobs Market is reviewed in more depth in chapter 10 of this review.

## **7. Learning and development of managers in recruitment and selection**

Following a meeting with the HR Consultant, it was agreed to obtain evidence of what the Authority is doing in respect of training and developing managers in the recruitment and selection process.

### **7.1 Current situation**

Currently the training of managers in recruitment and selection is delivered by the Authority's in house departmental training teams. Whilst there is a corporate template which aims to ensure a consistent approach across all services, departments are able to tailor this to suit the particular needs of the service managers they are training.

As delivery depends upon demand, there is inconsistency in the regularity in which sessions are delivered. The working group note HR's view that some cross cutting job families may find the tailoring too specific to the main professional focus.

The corporate template does include the need to ensure employment legislation, including the Equality Act of 2010 and the Employment Equality (age) regulations 2006. The Derbyshire County Council policies and procedures are included with an emphasis on the value placed on a diverse workforce and equality of opportunity.

The working group note that reviews of current materials used within departments shows that the key messages are consistent. The Equality Act 2010, Guidance for Recruiting Managers is given to all participants and learning is tested through quizzes and group exercises. The working group also note HR's view that currently there is a lack of soft skill training in effective interviewing and assessment methodologies.

All courses delivered are recorded on the Authority's training administration system (LDS), with 298 people cross the Authority being trained in 2013/14.

Immediate evaluation of the course takes place and is used to review and improve the training. However not all of this evaluation data is stored for future reference. Currently there is no systematic medium to long term follow up.

## 7.2 Developments in recruitment & selection training.

The working group note that HR recognises that there can be improvements to both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the current training model.

E-learning has improved considerably since the first modules appeared and it is recognised that much of the “briefing” element of the training can be effectively delivered through e-learning. There is a current funding proposal being considered to procure a learning platform. This will increase the accessibility of e-learning by removing the need to go through the internal intranet and developing a user friendly interface which will better promote learning opportunities. The platform will also ensure e-learning is recorded in individual training records. This will enable regular management information on the use of the learning. It will also enable the learning to be “pushed” at new managers as part of an induction suite. It is recognised that in some areas support to access and use the modules will need to be provided, and in some instances alternative approaches may be used.

It is planned to provide an additional “soft skills” programme as part of a corporate core programme of management development. This will be face to face training that focuses on the skill sets needed to effectively put the knowledge gained through e-learning into practice. Whilst the e-learning would be mandatory, the soft skills would potentially be optional dependent on the experience of the individual, assessed through induction and My Plan. Funding for the introduction of a core programme has been agreed, and a procurement exercise to establish an approved supplier framework is on-going.

The e-learning modules will be developed in consultation with relevant parties and user tested before launch to the wider workforce. The governance of the e-learning catalogue will ensure the main corporate module is kept up to date, whilst service specific additional modules may be used if necessary. The module will be as interactive as possible to ensure participants are challenged in their thinking and have to make active decisions in relation to realistic scenarios.

The soft skills programme will be developed with the approved supplier(s) and relevant parties. The model may include the use of internal co-facilitators to build internal capacity and ensure the programme is thoroughly grounded in DCC policy and practice.

In 2015, the training administration system will be replaced by the SAP Enterprise Learning module. This will link into the existing personnel and finance SAP modules.

The project plan for the system includes greater central governance of data, strengthening the reliability of management information produced. The use of Business Warehouse reports will enable regular, tailored reports to be produced to inform decisions in relation to training delivered.

The specification includes the collation and reporting of immediate, short and medium term evaluation. This will link into the use of My Plan which includes the need to review any development undertaken. Increasingly on-line surveys are also taking place through the use of "Survey Monkey".

## 8. Equality analysis of job applications

An analysis of the Council's job applications by the different equality groups was carried out. The data focused on the applications, shortlisting and appointments by candidates from different equality groups from 2010-2014.

### 7.1 Main findings

The main findings from the analysis were:

- A relatively low level of declaration rates in some equality groups.
- A disproportionately higher percentage of people who considered they had a **disability** were shortlisted than had applied, but a lower percentage were appointed.
- A disproportionately lower percentage of people **aged 16-24** were shortlisted and appointed than had applied.
- Conversely, an over proportion of people **aged 35-49** were appointed than had applied.
- A disproportionately lower percentage of **males** were shortlisted and appointed than had applied.
- A disproportionately lower percentage of those from an **ethnic minority** were shortlisted and appointed than had applied.
- A slight over proportion of people who considered themselves Christian were shortlisted and appointed than had applied.
- The above findings have remained the same for the last 4 years.
- In the last year, there were a disproportionately lower number of those who considered themselves **LGBT** appointed than had applied.

### 7.2 Full analysis

The next pages provide comment on job application data through the recruitment process. This was from information provided on the numbers and percentage of people by different protected characteristics that have applied, shortlisted and successful in being appointed to a post in the Authority.

Unless stated, the statistics quoted are sourced from the Authority's internal Shared Service Centre. The data includes all posts in the County Council except school advertised posts and relief posts.

The departmental split is based on the Shared Service Centre's current configuration, and does not exactly fit with new structures of the Council. Where it was possible, national or other comparative data has been included to provide contextual information to the position of the Authority.

It should be noted that there are low declaration rates in some areas, especially sexual orientation, disability and religion. Building employees and applicants' confidence to responding fully to monitoring questions is important. This will ensure there is validity in the monitoring undertaken and any decisions that are taken based on the data held by different equality groups.

**To understand the extent of this issue, the working group recommend that HR undertake a benchmarking study of non-declaration rates by equality groups from other Councils and any associated best practice.**

### 7.3 Sexual orientation

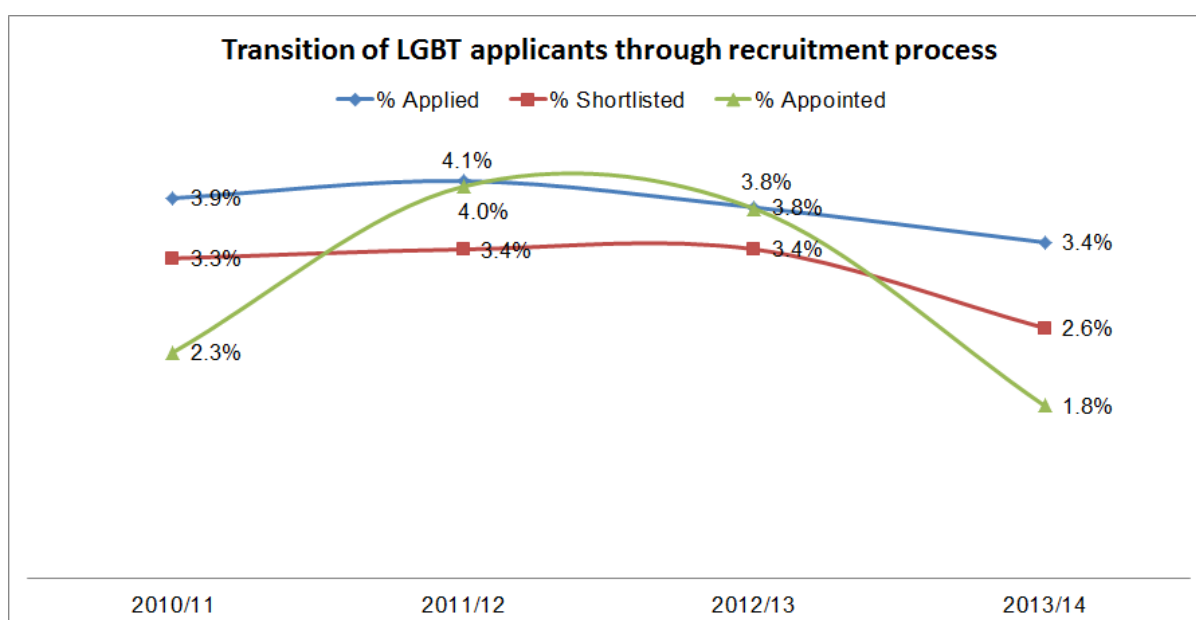
The vast majority of applicants to the Authority who declared their sexual orientation, considered themselves as heterosexual (92%). However, the working group noted that declaration rates were just over half (56% in 2013/14).

The working group note that the Authority has made efforts to increase declaration rates by encouraging people to 'declare' on the monitoring form (this includes people who declare that they prefer not to say). HR has a continuous programme across the Council to ask employees to check and update the information held about them, including the equalities monitoring data. It encourages employees to respond fully, assuring confidentiality. However, HR has noted that some people do not want to disclose what they see as personal information to an employer, even anonymously, and even if the benefits are explained. The working group's recommendation of a benchmarking report of non-declaration rates should highlight whether there are other practices the Authority could look at.

There was little difference in the proportion of people who applied, were shortlisted and appointed by individual sexual orientation.



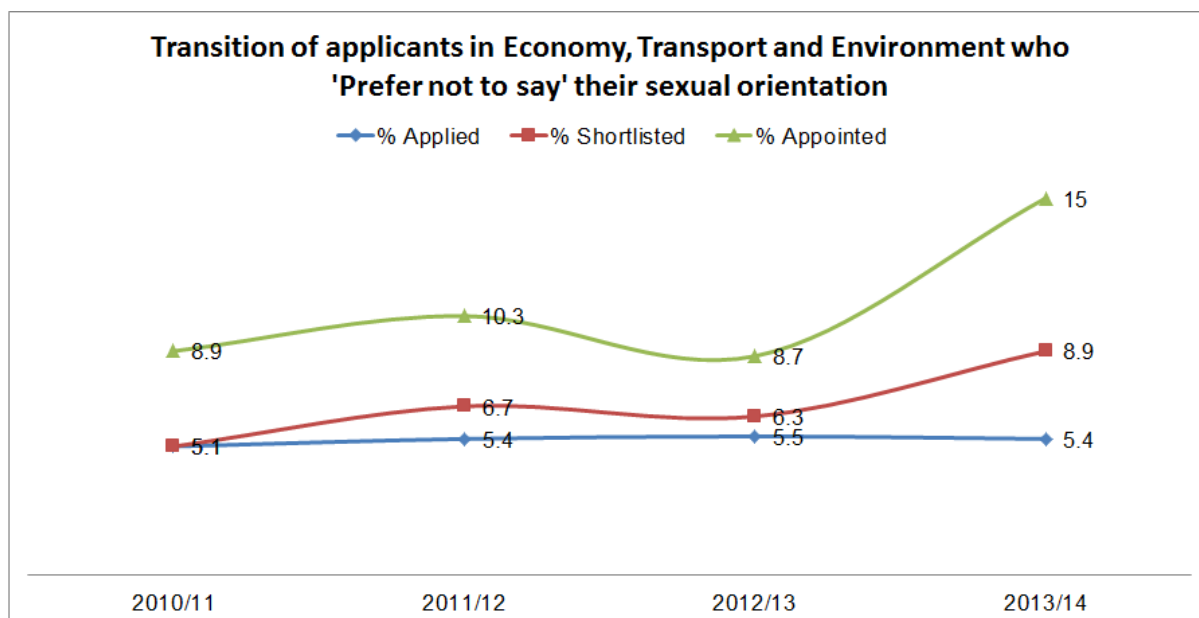
However, when looking at Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans (LGBT) together, with those who stated 'other', there was a lower proportion that was appointed to the Authority than applied. For example, in 2013/14, 3.4% of all applicants to the Authority (who declared) were LGBT. 2.6% of those shortlisted were LGBT and 1.8% who were appointed who were LGBT. Although the gap between the percentages of those who considered themselves LGBT did narrow by 2012/13, in the last year it widened back to previous levels. The table below pictorially demonstrates this trend over the last four years:



Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

It was difficult to compare against other authorities due to different ways of monitoring and not everyone declaring their sexual orientation. Data from the Integrated Household Survey of 2011 estimated that 5% of the population, when asked identified themselves at that time to be LGBT. In Derbyshire, it was estimated to be around 1-3% according to Derbyshire County Council monitoring data and other local network groups.

However, there were some departmental variations. One trend was for Economy, Transport and Environment Department to consistently have proportionally more people shortlisted and appointed than applied who stated they would 'prefer not to say' their sexual orientation. For example, in 2013/14, just over 5% of applicants for posts in the Department stated they would 'prefer not to say'. This increased to 9% of all those shortlisted and 15% of all those appointed. The table below pictorially demonstrates this trend over the last four years:



Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

Cultural and Community Services had a consistently lower percentage of heterosexuals who applied comparative to the Authority. Also, the Department had greater percentages that 'prefer not to say'. However, this was based on low numbers and therefore caution should be used when interpreting the numbers.

#### 7.4 Disability

Declaration rates for people who considered themselves disabled remain low. Some people acquire them whilst at work or do not recognise a disability, particularly if they are 'hidden', for example dyslexia or diabetes. The data provided below includes employees having a long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits their day to day activities

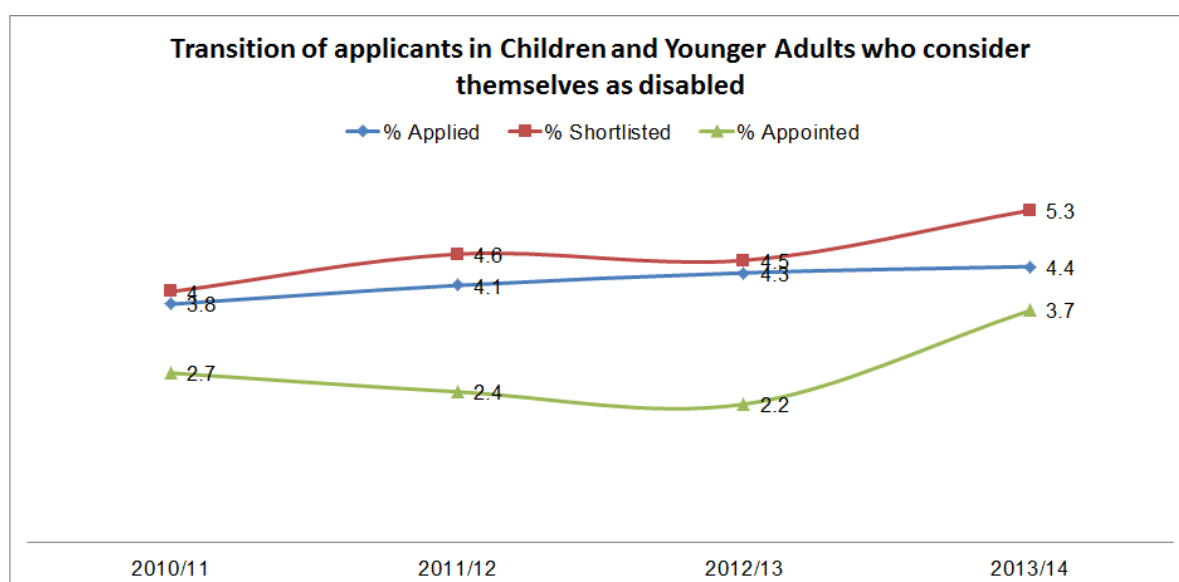
Over the last four years, on average 4.5% of those who applied to the Authority considered they had a disability. This increased to 5.6% of those who were shortlisted. However, the trend then reversed to 4% of those appointed. The working group note HR's comment that this was probably due to the 'Two Ticks' scheme. This is where if a disabled candidate met the essential criteria for a post, they were guaranteed an interview.

Fewer people who considered they had a disability applied, down from 622 in 2010/11 to 563 in 2013/14. However, the Authority had more applicants where disability information was available, increasing to 89% from 81% in 2010/11. The research findings from the Employer Panel and Network events (section 5) highlight the perception that the Authority can improve on the work

it has done to make County Hall and other Council buildings more accessible for disabled people. Additionally, the research found support for 'job carving'. This is where the Authority selected elements of a job which are judged suitable for a learning disabled person. The recruitment and selection process is then tailored and targeted to learning disabled candidates. The working group note the Authority's success in using this in the last few years.

**To understand whether this policy can continue to work in the current climate of financial efficiencies, the working group recommend that HR review the future developments of job carving for those with learning disabilities as appropriate. This to be combined with recommendation 6 as listed in the executive summary.**

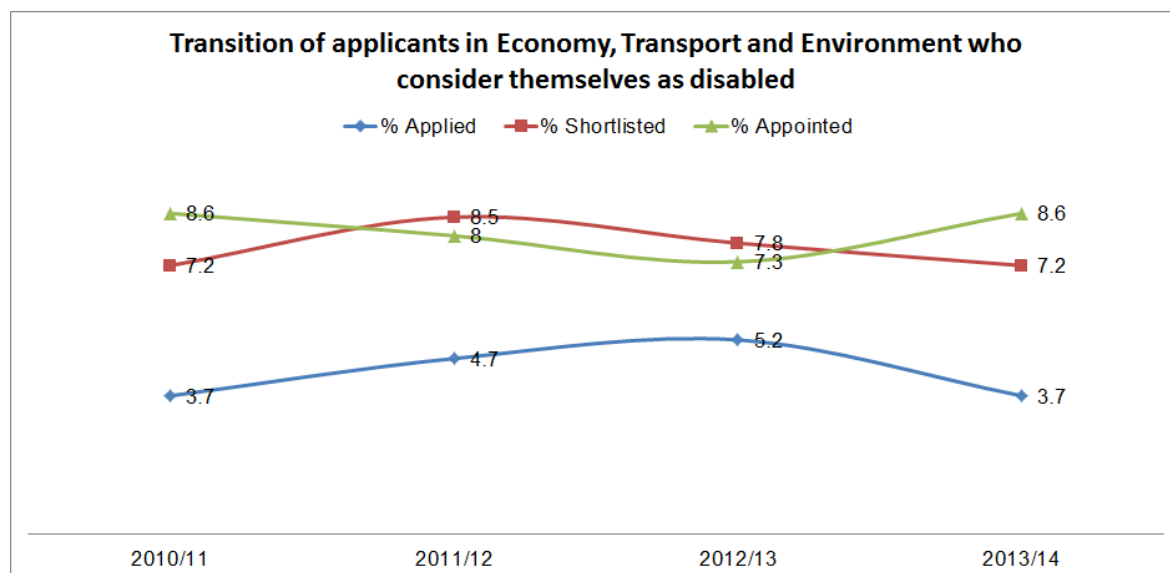
There are some departmental variations. Children and Younger Adults had consistently appointed a smaller percentage of people who considered themselves disabled than who had applied. However, these were very small percentage changes and, although a trend, it was also based on a small number (single figures) of people. The table below pictorially demonstrates this trend over the last four years:



Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

There trend was reversed for Economy, Transport and Environment, although as with Children and Younger Adults, it was based on very low numbers. The table below demonstrates this. Other departments had little or no trend to speak of. It was very difficult to compare the Authority with others. This was due to the way the Council requests information on whether the applicants

considered themselves disabled. This maybe different to any official disability status they may have had.

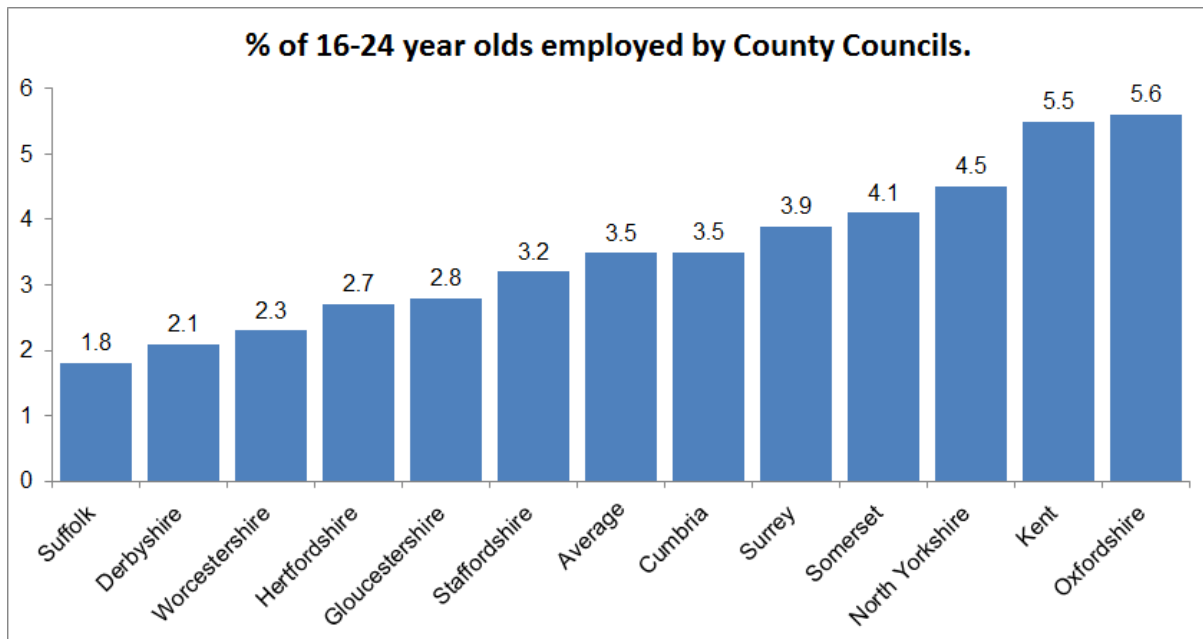


Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

## 7.5 Age

Over the last four years, on average 13% of those who applied at the Authority were aged 16-24. Of those shortlisted, 9% were in this age group and 8% were appointed. Conversely, those aged 35-49 amounted to 34% of all applicants, 40% of those shortlisted and 42% of those appointed. The working group note HR's comments that this could be due to those aged 35-49 have considerably more experience and placed them in a strong position against less experienced applicants.

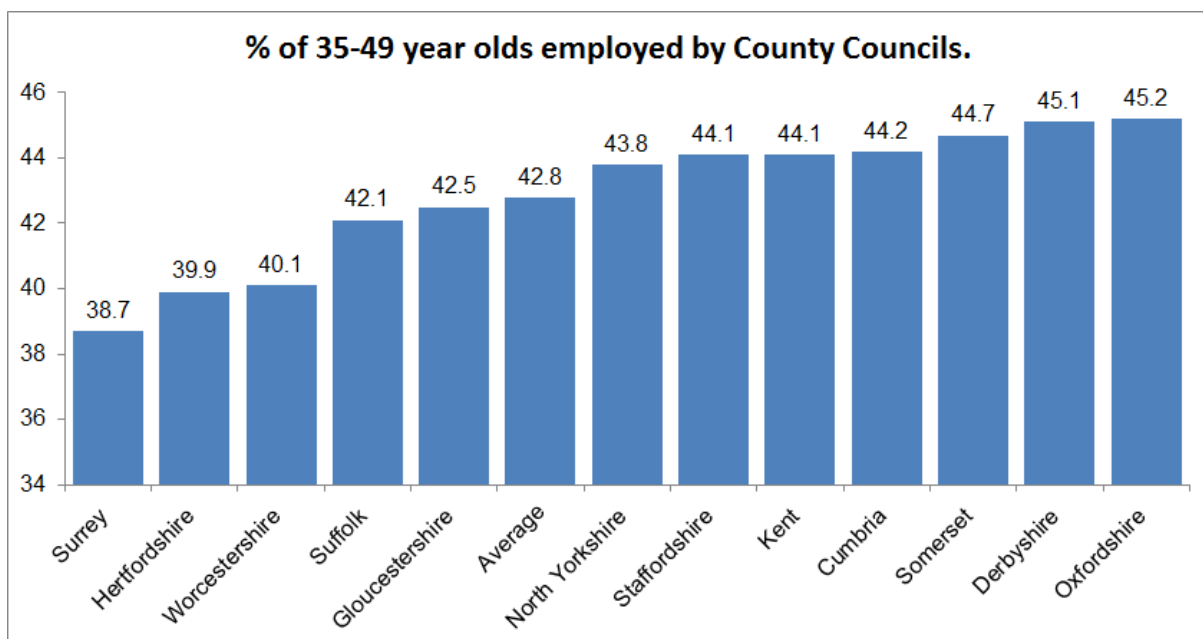
In comparison to other County Councils, Derbyshire had the second lowest percentage of 16-24 year olds employed in 2012/13. This was mainly from those aged 22-24, where the Authority was nearly one percentage point lower than the average. It should be noted, however, that there are relatively small differences in the percentages (less than 6%) between the lowest and highest Councils. The chart on the next page highlights this. Additionally, the recruitment of apprentices within the workforce is not included in this data, as they are not employed by the Authority.



Source - LGA Workforce Survey 2012/13, based on 12 County Councils supplying data).

In addition, the research findings from the Employer Panel and Network events (section 5) highlight the perception that the Authority struggles to attract and recruit young people.

Additionally, the Authority had the second highest percentage of 35-49 year olds employed in 2012/13. It should be noted, however, that there are relatively small differences in the percentages (less than 7%) between the lowest and highest Councils. The chart below demonstrates this further.



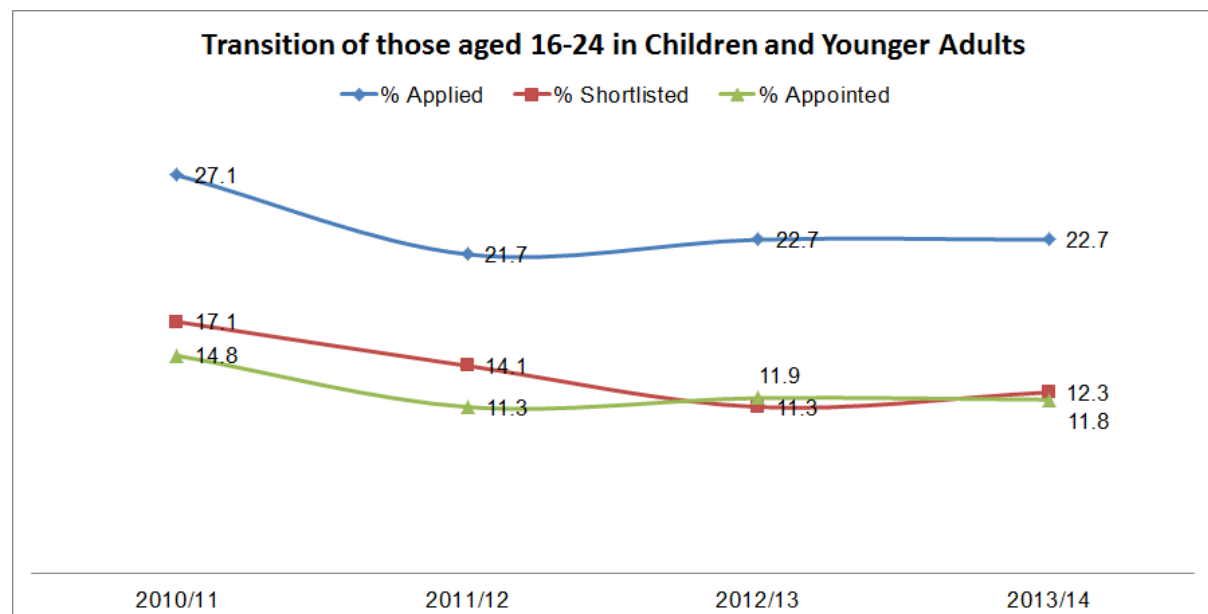
Source - LGA Workforce Survey 2012/13, based on 12 County Councils supplying data).

Those aged 25-34 and 50-64 broadly had similarly proportions between the different stages of the selection process. However the trend in the last three years was for lesser percentage of those 50-64 being appointed, from 25% in 201/12 to 20% in 2013/14.

**The working group recommend that HR investigate reasons for unsuccessful interviews for those aged 16-24 to understand any trends which could be fed back to relevant departments and educational institutions. This to be combined with recommendation 7 as listed in the executive summary.**

All departments showed a similar trend in the disproportion of 16-24 year olds at the Authority, although the scale was larger in some than others. In Children and Younger Adults, the data showed some large variations between the percentages of those aged 16-24 who applied for employment and those shortlisted and appointed. For example, in 2013/14, nearly 23% of all applicants for employment in the department were from 16-24 year olds. This reduced to 12% of all those shortlisted and appointed respectively. The chart below demonstrates this further.

Cultural and Community Services have large variations too, although the numbers of applications received are much lower in number.

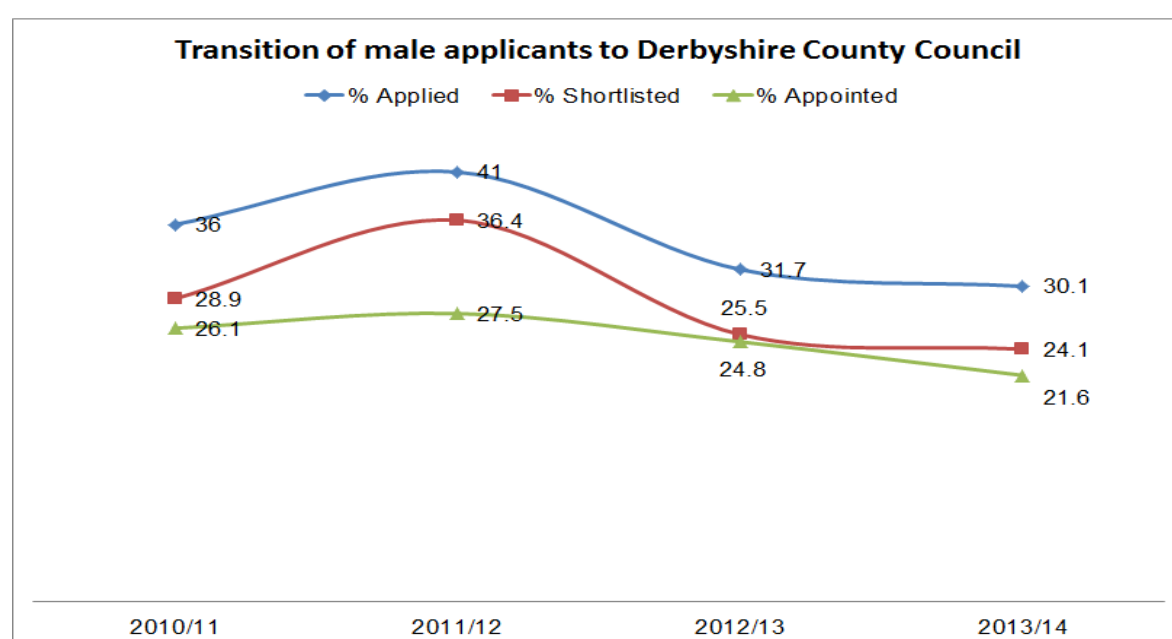


Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

## 7.6 Gender

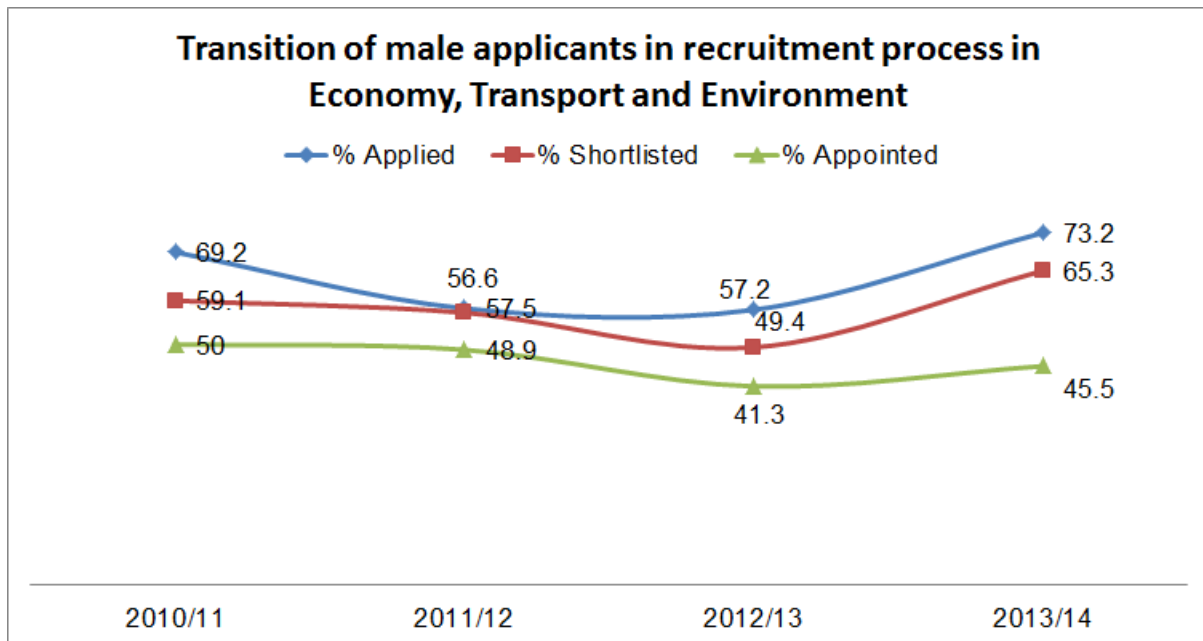
Three quarters (77%) of the workforce in the Authority are female, and this was similar to the national picture for local authorities of 75%, according to the Quarterly Public Sector Employees Survey from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Over the last four years, on average 35% of those who applied to the Authority were male. This decreased to 29% of those who are shortlisted and 25% of those appointed. In 2013/14 alone, this had decreased even more to 22% (from 30% of applicants who were male). There was a similar trend for each of the last four years. The table below pictorially demonstrates this trend:



Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

All departments showed a similar trend to that mentioned above, although the scale was larger in some than others. For example, for both Economy, Transport and Environment and the Corporate Resources Departments there were some large variations for males who applied for employment and those shortlisted and appointed. The table on the next page shows this in more detail for Economy, Transport and Environment.

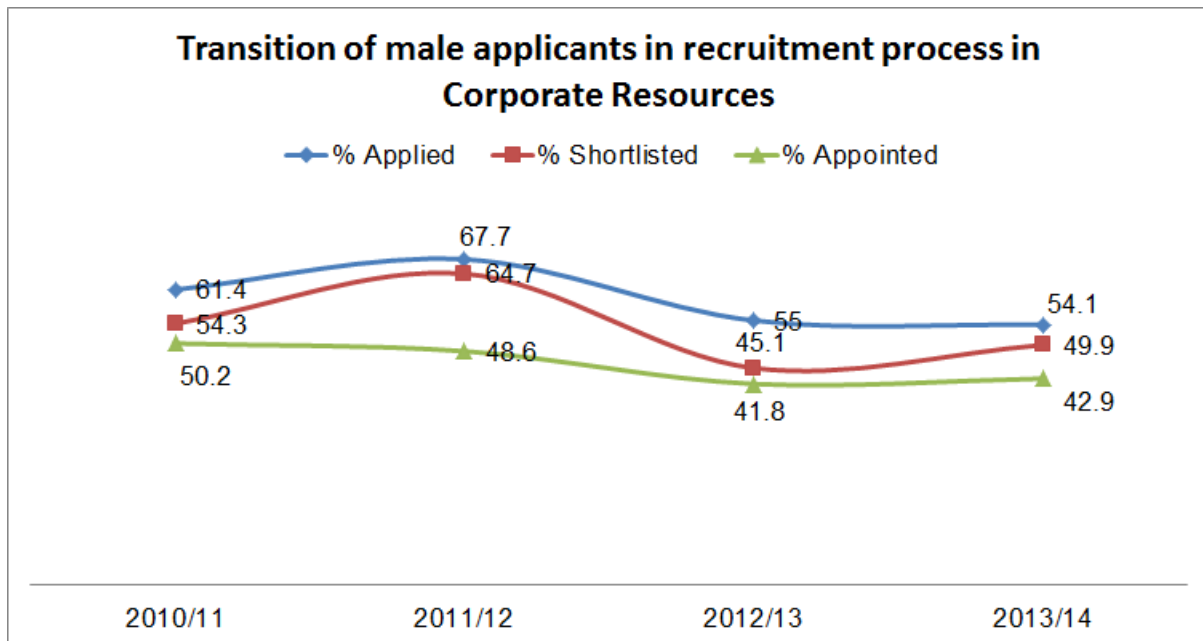


Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

The above chart showed there was a growing gap between the percentage of males who had applied to Economy, Transport and Environment and those who had been shortlisted and appointed. For example, in 2013/14, nearly three quarters (73%) of all applicants were male and this reduced to two thirds of all those shortlisted. Out of the total appointments into employment in the Department, 45% were male, a drop of 28 percentage points.

Although there was a similar picture in Corporate Resources, the variations between the percentage of males who applied to those shortlisted or appointed were much lower and the gap had narrowed since 2010/11. For example, in 2011/12, 68% of all applicants were males and 49% were appointed. By 2013/14 this has changed to 54% and 43% respectively. The table on below shows this in more detail.





Source – Internal Shared Services Data from HR.

The data also showed that more females applied to Corporate Resources roles and that this department was the most gender balanced departments in the Authority with a near 50-50 ratio.

## 7.7 Ethnic Minority

Nationally, the Local Government Earnings Survey 2010/11 showed 8.2% of the local government workforce in England and Wales were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. The most prominent BAME groups were Black and Black British (3.2%) and Asian and Asian British (3.0%). However, in the East Midlands, the percentages dropped and showed that in the region 3% are from BAME backgrounds.

Over the last four years, of all people who applied to the Authority, 10% considered themselves from an ethnic minority. This decreased to 8% of those who were shortlisted and 4.5% of those appointed. There was a similar trend for each of the last four years.

All departments showed a similar trend in what was mentioned above, although due to the low numbers it was unfair to draw out too many conclusions from the data. However, monitoring information was sound and the Authority has consistently collected information on ethnicity from over 96% of applications over the last four years.

## 7.8 Religion

Declaration rates are low for people stating their religion (or not), at around 59% for 2013/14.

Over the last four years, of all people who applied to the Authority and did declare, just over half (51%) considered themselves a Christian. This increased to 54% of those who were shortlisted and 56% of those appointed. Conversely, those who considered themselves as having no religion amounted to 38% of all applicants, 35% of those shortlisted and 35% of those appointed. There was a similar trend for each of the last four years.

## **9. Job adverts and media advertising**

An analysis of the Council's media spend on external job advertising was conducted. Data provided by HR showed that during 2012/13, the Council spent £58,000 on advertising 46 posts in the media. All posts were also advertised on the Council's website and associated publications.

Of the total media spend 41% or £23,700 was attributed to where there was no successful candidate. A further 18%, or £10,500 of spend via media actually went to a candidate who applied from the Authority's jobs website. Many of the 46 posts advertised were filled as a result of the successful candidate seeing the job vacancy via Council sources or word of mouth.

Only 9 media advertisements were attributed as the direct source of the successful candidates.

Therefore, the working group noted that nearly 60% (or £34k) of the total media advertising spent on posts did not actually bring any successful applicants in. However, the Council has significantly reduced spending on media advertising for job applications. Ten years ago, spend was over £1m, which provides some context on the different way jobs are advertised now. The working group note that HR are considering the merit in directing potential applicants to the Authority's website from advertising the Council externally in the future.

## 10. Job initiatives

### 10.1 Internal Jobs Market

With large scale job cuts to be made in the next four years, the Authority's approach to resourcing is to change. This will be done by the adoption of the concept of an Internal Jobs Market (IJM), which is currently in development. This will enable the Authority to maximise the possibility of using our existing workforce to meet future service needs. Any staff displaced as their jobs cease will go into the IJM and be matched to any vacancies elsewhere in the Council which are suitable for their core strengths and potential to achieve, in addition to their technical skills, knowledge and experiences.

All work opportunities will be filled by people from the IJM. External recruitment will only take place if there are no suitable matches in the IJM. Anyone who would like promotion or a sideways move, even if their current job is not at risk, would join the IJM after its launch in order to be able to access new opportunities.

The working group noted from discussions with the HR Consultant that this would at first focus on employees at risk of redundancy, but will be opened up to all staff after its launch. The IJM will be commissioned shortly, following soft market testing with providers (who will deliver the software and training).

The working group discussed the equality and diversity issues surrounding this development. The ability to match employees to vacancies using software has been used by several other Councils, therefore HR are confident in its use. The working group was also assured there will be a lot of support for employees who need to fill in questionnaires to go into the IJM system. The working group also noted that the IJM will only be for Council employees at first, and prioritised to those at risk initially. However, with the potential for greater partnership working in the future, there may be a need to increase the scope of the IJM to include districts, borough and other public bodies.

The working group noted that the research findings from the Employee Panel and Network representatives was positive and that such an approach would be the 'right thing to do'. The research also highlighted that it would speed up the process of recruitment for managers. However, the working group also noted employee's views that it should work on a wider scale than just those people who are currently at risk and receiving support from HR.

The working group noted that the benefits of the IJM are to assist displaced employees to find alternative work as effectively as possible. It will also mitigate redundancies that would otherwise be needed. Lastly, it will look beyond obvious alternatives to find opportunities which match potential rather than experience. However, the working group noted the findings from the employee research, and queries how the Authority can continue to achieve a more diverse workforce if there is a focus on redeploying existing staff where possible through the IJM? Overall, there was mixed views on the Authority protecting existing employees by filling jobs internally whenever possible versus the need for new recruits externally.

**The working group recommend that the findings from this review to be taken into account in the consultation on the development of the Internal Jobs Market.**

## 10.2 Recruitment of young people

The Authority made a commitment in December 2011 to host up to 500 apprenticeships opportunities. The working group note some positive outcomes achieved so far in the number and quality of employment and the training provided.

There are the following paths for young people to be recruited into DCC, outside of direct applications:

- Apprenticeship Scheme
- Step Forward Scheme
- Work Experience Scheme
- Care Leavers Employment Project

### Apprenticeship Scheme

The current scheme started in 2012, although there is a history of the Authority employing apprenticeships, for example in Property. The Scheme is managed by the Authority and Chesterfield College, a partner who assists in the recruitment and support of potential recruits. Any successful apprentice is

employed through Learning Unlimited, which is part of Chesterfield College but are supported and managed by the Authority and the college.

As of June 2014, there have been 207 apprenticeships started through the scheme, just over half who are still on placement (109). The length of contracts can vary, from 13 months for those in business administration to 3-4 years for those roles that need the relevant qualifications, such as Property. Nearly half (46) of those no longer on apprenticeships have found full-time employment in the Authority. The main source of employment is within business administration. Another 21 have gone onto employment externally or into higher education.

An evaluation prepared by the Authority and Learning Unlimited showed some positive outcomes for those in the scheme, including:

- A higher than average percentage (87%) of apprenticeships going into employment or education
- 89% of apprenticeships felt well supported and valued by their team.
- 91% would recommend an apprenticeship with the Council to others.

Managers were also positive about the value of the scheme and the apprentices in their team and for the Authority. The findings from the survey compared favourably with the results from the CIPD Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey 2013.

The applications for the next round of apprenticeships in September are currently being considered. On average, there were nearly 10 applications for every apprenticeship, with 453 young people going for 43 opportunities.

The working group note the progress made with the apprenticeship scheme and the positive outcomes it has achieved for the young people that gone through it. However, the group also note the potential funding changes to apprenticeship schemes which may result in the monies being transferred to employers rather than Learning Agencies. This may mean an alternative model of delivering against its target figure in the future.

### Step Forward Scheme

The scheme is designed to signpost those young people who may have been unsuccessful in the recruitment process to other opportunities. This includes Traineeships, which provide young people with a formal structure and work experience, to ensure they are 'apprenticeship ready' in 6 to 12 months' time. At this point, they are guaranteed an apprenticeship interview.

### Work Experience Scheme

The Authority has developed a 'portal' ([derbyshire.work-experience.co.uk/](http://derbyshire.work-experience.co.uk/)) which young people can access work experience opportunities to improve employability skills.

This is at both in the Authority and other organisations, which have been risk assessed. The working group note the developments made to the 'portal' to include traineeships, internships and graduate placements.

The working group also note the early notification HR provides teams such as the Learning Disabilities, Youth Offending, Schools, Multi Agency Teams and Care Leavers of the opportunities detailed above.

### Care Leavers Employment Project

As part of the Authority's corporate parenting responsibilities, care leavers have been provided with specific targeted support in gaining employment opportunities. Care leavers' interview skills are developed and are prepared for work, done in conjunction with their support worker. The Authority has put in place protocols to ensure care leavers turn up for interviews and are fully prepared. These are being extended to guarantee as best it can care leavers are apprenticeship ready and have the opportunity of a final interview when applying for apprenticeships.

The working group note the positive outcomes in this area, particularly the nine who have already been successful in gaining an apprenticeship and the ten who have applied for the most recent scheme.

However, the working group also note the challenge the Authority faces of rolling the above schemes out further to ensure accessibility to looked after children. HR is aware of this issue, and is keen to roll out the good practice

obtained to this group. The working group note the evidence from visits to children homes, where Support Workers feel they don't have the necessary knowledge or expertise to share with the looked after children in their care. This is the case also for more informal work experience opportunities.

**The working group recommend that HR extend the current good practice of apprenticeships and work experience to those looked after children, including training and developing Care and Support Workers to support looked after children in gaining such opportunities.**

The working group also note the positive outcomes achieved for those young people with physical and learning disabilities. This includes the employment of two people with Aspergers.

However, the Employee Panel and Network representatives highlighted that the Authority struggles to attract and recruit younger people. Although this is a perception, the equality analysis of job applications in section 8 highlighted a disproportionate percentage of 16-24 year olds who applied to the Authority compared to those appointed.

The working group also noted research that was undertaken on behalf of HR in August 2013 of employees aged 16-24 (Fiona Gilbert, MSc. Encouraging the engagement of Derbyshire County Council young employees). The research found participants were generally positive to the Authority's employment provisions and the majority were engaged. However, the research also showed that, whilst the vast majority of young people agreed they intended to develop a career within the Authority (over 80%); there was also nearly 20% to disagreed. Although nearly two-thirds (65%) agreed that the Authority supported their continuous development, more than a half (58%) were unsure or disagreed that it would provide promotion opportunities.

This finding is in keeping with the research from the Employee Panel and Network groups, who felt there was a barrier to employment, with a perceived "jobs for the boys (or girls)" and predetermined employment of posts for people.

However, the working group also note that turnover of employees aged 16-24 years old is half of the average for the Council overall. Data provided by HR (for all posts excluding schools and relief posts) showed that in 2013/14, 5% of those aged 16-24 left the Authority compared to nearly 10% overall.



## **11. Review conclusions**

The working group acknowledges the work that the Authority has done to ensure there is equality, diversity and inclusion considerations in its recruitment and selection process.

The challenge for the Authority is to identify what it can practically do so that the Authority's workforce is reflective of the residents it serves, whilst ensuring recruitment is on based on merit and need.

The findings and recommendations from this review will help the Authority's continual improvement in its equality, diversity and inclusion work. Although the review is focused on the recruitment and selection process, there are implications for the wider agenda of ensuring there is equality of opportunity.

This review should also be seen in the context of the findings from the separate scrutiny of equality and diversity in the decision making process at the Authority. A final report will be published in due course and will provide the Authority with further recommendations of how it can look to deliver its equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

**Notes from the Employee Panel held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

Present:

Three HR facilitators.

Six employee reps from Corporate Resources

Five employee reps from Children and Young People

Two employee reps from Economy, Transport and Environment

One employee rep from Adult Care

One employee rep from Health and Communities

**QUESTIONS ON RECRUITMENT:**

**1) Advertising.**

**a) How did you hear about your most recent job and where was it advertised?**

- Joined council 4 years ago after a career in Civil Service and management consultancy from which retired. Read an article in a national magazine about being a registrar and thought it sounded interesting. Then saw an advert in a free paper and applied. Not successful so was slightly annoyed and went on to the website to look for future opportunities. Signed up for electronic updates and tried again shortly after and was successful.
- Started in a temporary data analysis job in Adult Care and moved 3 years ago to CaYA when the equivalent job came up as a permanent position.
- TUPE'd into the council with Public Health last year.
- Acting Assistant Business Manager – internal promotion has 6 years council experience having come from Jobcentre Plus (2 years) and before that was a pub landlady (11 years). She saw council adverts all the time as part of her job. Used website to see what was available.
- Internal promotion. Came into council 7 years ago after 20 years at the Nat West Bank.
- Looking on d-net, or the council's website, or for example for a recent midday supervisor job, on the school noticeboard.
- The job centre website can be useful as it has our vacancies on it too.
- DCC website external. I have in the past used job sheets, but these seemed to have stopped a lot. I don't also know when the website is updated as it doesn't say anywhere, this website is updated weekly or monthly etc., so I don't know how often to check it.

- Internal adverts on DNet are difficult to follow as you don't know when a new job has gone on unless someone tells you and not everyone has access to DNet so some people are being excluded.
- We only get to find out about internal jobs through word of mouth.
- I have missed internal jobs before and spotted them only when they were advertised externally, which is an additional cost to the Authority if people are missing jobs they would have gone for.
- If I didn't work for DCC I wouldn't automatically think of looking on the website for jobs. I would now, but not before working here.

**b) What can we do to make the way we advertise job vacancies more attractive or accessible to people inside and outside the council?**

- The electronic updates you can sign up to be notified of vacancies are very good – several people said this.
- They all agreed that as we are the council we are well known and people know to look on our website for jobs.
- Website is good. It works well.
- It is easy to use.
- The Key Terms facility works well.
- It is really good that when you use the external website it keeps all your details and then when you use it again, all the information is there and you don't have to re-enter it.
- It's an effort the first time you use it but then you reap the rewards later. It's also easy to change any detail which needs amending if things change over time.
- If it's an internal vacancy, you are often tipped off by a colleague to apply. If you're at risk, you get job sheets sent to you.
- Job sheets go to Jobcentres so even if you have no internet access at home, you can go to jobcentre or library and it is easy enough to see what is available.
- It's really important to give people the choice to apply either on line or on a paper copy as not everyone has access to the internet, and those people should be able to phone up and ask for an applicant pack.
- Pompous language puts people off – need to use plain English.
- Complicated documents and job and person profiles put people off – hard to understand what the job actually involves.
- The growth in fixed term contracts puts people off – many people are looking for the security of a permanent contract. The 'best' people won't apply for a fixed term contract. People would rather stay in a lower paid permanent job than move to a higher paid fixed term job, and secondment arrangements are sometimes not trusted, as there is the fear that your job might not be there when the secondment ends. Many people ask whether there is any chance of a fixed term contract becoming permanent – there is never any guarantee.

- Need to improve our image as an employer- single status, pay reductions and reputation for wasting money (specific example of where employees have left the council on redundancy and then been reemployed doing a similar job) have had a negative impact on this.
- Word of mouth from existing employees is really powerful – they will pass on their motivation or demotivation out of work.
- One observation from someone who had come to the council from the private sector was that compared to the private sector the council was much better as an employer, as it is more secure and more trusted. However it feels now that with the cut backs and financial pressures, the atmosphere is becoming more like the private sector.
- We don't advertise externally except on website and perhaps we are restricting options. However, there is a cost associated with recruiting with adverts, and we tend to get enough people applying for jobs just using the website. If there is a real pocket of difficulty we would tend to advertise in the relevant specialist magazine, but this is rarely needed.

#### **b) What puts people off wanting to apply for jobs?**

- The job descriptions can often be worded in such detail that people think they can't possibly do the job as it seems so complicated.
- Some phrases seem to suggest that outsiders are not welcome e.g. "You will be familiar with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy" or "DCC's financial procedures". When I read that it sounds as if there is an internal candidate lined up to do the job.
- There is too much in the Job Descriptions for this purpose.
- I think Single Status didn't help as everyone bigged up their jobs, putting in everything they've ever done. It is too intimidating and gives a picture of where you might be at the end of your time in the job, not where you need to be at the start.
- The ability to learn is important. You can train people if they have the right attitude and personal skills.

#### **a) Do we advertise in the right places - where else should we advertise?**

- Things are Ok as they are. If we are not getting enough response we should target areas where it is difficult to recruit.
- Some jobs are easy and you always get lots of applicants. Others are more difficult and you need to make more effort.
- Temporary jobs are off-putting – particularly short term temporary jobs and relief jobs are off-putting as most people want permanent work. It doesn't give continuity to the DCC to have lots of temporary appointments.
- A good example is advertising for part time school staff on the school notice board.
- What about free local papers?

- The Council should be more imaginative about where we advertise, e.g. on Town council notice boards, in supermarkets.
  - Don't think we should advertise, but we could perhaps use social media. Other councils advertise their jobs via social media and it saves people missing jobs because they've forgotten to look that week on the website.
  - We need a wider pool of people looking for internal jobs as it's the same people each time. We need to alert people of jobs i.e. texts that they sign up to or alerts, like they do for other things in the council where you sign up and you get updates. Job sheets seemed to have been reduced at a time when people are more willing and able to move jobs than ever before. People should be able to register an interest in hearing about internal jobs and getting alerts either by email or text, however, not sure of the costs of doing texts.
  - Jobs need to be split between teacher and non-teacher on the website as there's a lot of teaching jobs
  - A Scottish council I follow sends out twitter alerts for jobs they are advertising. It never has details of the job, just the link to their website with the job title.
  - We need to attract a wider range of candidates.
- c) How do you find out about council jobs now?
- DNet or website.
- d) Do you have any examples of specific issues or concerns that might impact on your/other peoples' likelihood to apply for a vacancy here?
- Covered in b above..
  - DNet or website, and nothing else except word of mouth that reminds me to keep looking.

## **2) Recruitment processes – e.g. application forms, the shortlisting process, pre-employment checks.**

### **a) How positive do you feel having been through the recruitment process – why? What could have been improved?**

- It is too lengthy – it can take ages from the point of resignation to someone else starting, Advertising, shortlisting and 3 months to get references – totally ridiculous.
- Had good experiences generally. One person had recently been to an interview and had been unsuccessful, but found the overall process OK.
- A couple of employees thought that the HR SSC filtered the applications and only those that had been filtered were forwarded to managers – they suggested this might be a good idea if we didn't do it already, but understood that managers might want to shortlist for their own teams.

- I feel positive about being recruited, but the process took too long. The main improvement is timescales as it's a long time to wait for managers and employees alike.

**b) What were the timescales like for your recruitment? Do things progress quickly enough?**

- It can be 4 months before someone starts work. I was interviewed in October and didn't start till the following March.
- I applied in January and started work in April.
- I waited a long time for my contract.
- The delays are in the process in the pre-employment team.
- The delays come after the interviewing.
- Internal recruitment should be quicker. There is no need for such checks.
- Health checks are slow. The process of writing out for a reference is slow.
- A reference request didn't reach us. They were slow to follow it up.
- An Occupational Health appointment was needed as I put on the form that I had a slight hearing loss. It took them 6 weeks to contact me and get an appointment. Then when I went for the appointment I didn't feel that the way they tested to see if I could hear a fire alarm was very appropriate.
- People get other jobs in the meantime.
- Are other firms quicker? From my experience of public sector "No" but much quicker in private sector. Banks are quicker.
- Banks have a probationary period of 3 months and had no qualms about getting rid of people during that time if they were no good.
- Perhaps we reduce wastage by being slower to recruit?
- For internal jobs the process was smooth as I knew the job very well
- It was also good for me as I had done a secondment previously.
- I have no issues with how we go about the first part of the recruitment process. The issues come after we select the right person. That can take 2-3 months – if it's a temporary contract, that can be a big percentage of it. By the time they've done the training, you might only get a months' work out of someone.
- The timescales are OK up to the point of selection and it's OK for external candidates. It would be good to let people know how long the process will take.
- It is helpful to know the interview date from the advert.
- Generally the timescales were OK, although they sometimes felt like they dragged on a bit.
- One person felt that as an external candidate the process felt rather lengthy.

- One person felt that the experience had been longer than necessary because some paperwork got lost, and there was a delay on the pre-employment health check.
- Timescales are really delayed sometimes. I have advertised a seasonal post and by the time it's ready to go out and someone have come to interview and got things ready, it's too late to appoint as the season has ended. It's a waste of time.
- Timescales need to be improved as I was appointed in September and didn't start until January. I know this isn't a long time but it is if you are waiting to leave a job and start another.
- Internal recruitment is more troublesome than external. When its external things seem to go quite quickly and you are informed at every stage of what is happening. When it's internal it's a bit more relaxed and the same communication doesn't seem to happen.
- DBS and medicals take too long. (discussion was held re changes to DBS and medicals that are upcoming)
- The council is very bureaucratic in its approach to R&S, however, we understand that certain things have to be that way.
- We lose people to different places i.e. catering, people don't want to wait 3 months to start their job. They can go for another catering job elsewhere and start within 2 weeks, so we appoint them and then end up losing them to somewhere else. Then because it's been 2 months since they were the successful candidate we have to re-advertise and start all over again. What are the timescales in being able to go to your other appointable candidates.
- Pre-interview the process is fine. It's one you've got your appointable candidate. SSC have no one person that takes you from the beginning to the end, so you end up talking to different people and having to explain your situation again and again. We don't have a relationship with them, it's all case number and not personal.
- The process is just too long between getting SMT approval, advertising approval, putting in advert, closing date, shortlisting, interview and then all the checks that come afterwards.

c) Considering the current financial situation the council is in, how do you think our recruitment processes need to change?

- It is not nice when you apply for a job and you simply don't hear anything and then you have to presume you weren't shortlisted. Can we write to people to say they have been unsuccessful. Perhaps we could automate this?
- A long delay to hear is stressful. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that people's lives are on hold whilst they are in that position.

- The time taken is too long particularly for internal candidates. Is it cheaper to cut down on recruitment processes and tighten up on the probationary period?
- Should we toughen up on the shortlisting procedure if there are lots of candidates and only see the really good ones.
- We are asking for applications which are too complicated.
- Find out what the expensive components of the recruitment process are and cut down on those to make savings.
- The slow bit is the check i.e. medical/DBS/references.
- Services suffer if recruitment is not done quickly enough. We need to be more efficient.
- If you are on a zero hours contract, that can mess your benefits up. They can exclude people on benefits.
- Given the savings required, the group felt that the public would rather money was spent on employing existing employees than paying for redundancies.
- Concerns raised that employees are released under redundancy and then re-appointed in very similar jobs. Proper planning of the resources required to deliver the service would ensure that this doesn't happen, as it is a waste of public money.
- The group felt that the real cost of taking on new employees was greater than was usually considered – they don't know the council, require a longer induction period, and may need more training before they are productive.
- It was felt that we should be making the most of the employees we've already have within the council.
- Recruitment and selection decisions will depend on the cuts and how we can move people around to avoid redundancy. Internally advertising needs to be better. However the current at risk procedure really works, so perhaps something more like that for people to sign up to if they are interested about changing jobs whether they are at risk or not.
- There should be some sort of matching process, of what people can do and what they are interested in.
- There is a qualification barrier – some jobs have no need for a degree but they always list it in the advert – this stops people being able to move around. It should say experience is as good as qualifications sometimes.
- We need to look at role profiles and make sure people aren't excluded.
- Job Profiles are so vague they often bear no resemblance to the job anyway
- We know that by asking for skills and qualifications we are trying to attract a certain calibre of candidate, but sometimes we need to see beyond just qualifications.
- We can't just keep recycling the same people though if they are facing redundancy. Sometimes people just can't change jobs and should leave.
- We have to make a decision on who is right for the Authority.



- Some people are good at their job, but can't really do another job very well and shouldn't be redeployed. This is displacing problems that will impact on service delivery.
- We can't force people to consider new jobs as its putting a square peg in a round hole.

d) How would you feel about the council doing more to fill jobs internally wherever possible, for example using an automatic matching system which matches employees to vacancies, like Nottingham City Council do?.

- It is short-sighted to recruit internally with redeployees. Good people will leave and we get left with the less good. We don't necessarily want to commit to our own people above everything else. We can end up recycling rubbish.
- We need fresh blood to bring in oxygen. We would get left with the residue who are not motivated to get better jobs elsewhere - time servers waiting till they get their pensions.
- We need to make space by redundancies. We try too hard to fit people in. We go too far at the moment to squeeze people in.
- The group felt that if the council showed greater commitment to matching employees to internal vacancies wherever possible, especially when they may be at risk of redundancy, it would demonstrate to employees that the council cares about them.
- It was felt that it would show that the council believes in its employees' skills and abilities and it would result in employees feeling greater loyalty to the council.
- The cost of setting up an internal matching system might be a consideration – how much would be reasonable ?
- Overall they viewed the idea very positively and that this was the 'right thing to do'.
- Internal matching system would be a good idea, but make it voluntary and have people matched if they are interested. People can either receive text or email when there is a match to their criteria. If they say yes/no this should trigger off the link or application form being sent to them.
- People are often labelled as the job they do, but people have transferrable skills and could do many things. People sometimes want change and want to look for opportunities.
- As a manager, a wider pool of candidates is better as you are then not always seeing the same people over and over and never appointing them.
- If two places are advertising for similar jobs, why can't we piggy back, i.e. use one advert for both as in the past we have been advertising for MAT

managers in two locations, but as one was two weeks ahead we've not been able to just select from one list of candidates (Amanda explained that people may not have applied due to location and therefore you are not giving everyone a chance)

- The next appointable candidate should be appointable for up to 3 months, rather than just a few weeks, as sometimes people drop out half way through the recruitment process.
  - People should be able to sign up and receive updates on jobs. People don't always check for adverts.
  - Wage slip – you could put the link on the wage slip the first time it goes live, and then people can sign up if they want. They will need to list experience or just their interest in receiving job updates??? Not sure what is best.
- e) If you needed a DBS check did the process go smoothly? Were there any delays with any of the pre-employment checks?
- The group had found the CRB/DBS process straightforward and thought that any waiting was due to the external part of the process.
  - DBS takes forever, and causes people to leave the recruitment process
  - People understand that it takes time if they are coming from another place that has DBS
  - Medicals sometimes take time as well
  - Facilitator on table 2 explained Ebulk is going to speed things up re DBS and is due July – everyone thought it was going to improve things.

### **3) Satisfaction with correspondence.**

#### **a) Did you have enough notice of your interview and did the correspondence contain all the information you needed?**

- Notice was fine but it didn't say in my invite letter that I would have to do some tests – I thought it was just an interview but there was a lot more than that. It would have been nice to know what was expected
- Letters were clear and not confusing.
- They felt that they had been provided with lots of information before the interview – a map etc.
- One weeks' notice for an interview was normal.
- An advert online and the website said different closing dates for a job and the employee had to clarify with the SSC. Would have been nice to have the interview date on paperwork so I could plan ahead.
- Letters had the wrong date/time/location in the past and I've had to re-do interviews as by the time people had found the right place to come or

time they are really distressed and are unable to be interviewed. This has happened a hand full of times.

- Catering has had people turn up on the wrong date and then people have had to try and get more time off work from their current job.

**b) How easy to understand was the paperwork you received at any stage of the process and were there any errors in it?**

- All fine when it comes but hanging around waiting for it.
- The recruiters were not told that they needed to check my ID etc and so even though I had brought all the documents along to the interview, they weren't seen then and then it wasted time when I had to bring it all in again later on.
- Everyone had been happy with the standard of the paperwork - they had understood it and there hadn't been any errors.
- The letters seemed to be written in 'plain English' which made them easy to understand.
- Errors have been received on date/ time and location and people have turned up to the wrong place or on the wrong day and it's completely thrown them and their interviews have been affected.
- The language of the paperwork is fine and never received any complaints or comments.

**c) If you had any queries were you able to chase things up easily i.e. contact on letters etc.?**

- Some people had used the contact number on the letter, and the contact person had always been able to help them.
- The SSC are not easy to get hold of and the options don't often match what you want to discuss. We need better contacts options.
- We used to have named people to contact in the SSC and now we don't. This makes a difference as no one person sees the recruitment process through from the beginning to the end. This causes communication errors and delays.
- SSC don't respond to e-mails.

**d) How could the correspondence you received have been improved?**

- Overall sometimes there was too much 'waffle' – it must be meaningful for the employee.
- When you see a lot of words you tend not to want to read it.
- An example given was that sending the whole equalities and diversity policy to new starters was too much and too 'heavy'. A summary of the main points for employees would have been better.
- Accuracy improved. Better contact methods, named contacts.
- It feels like there is a barrier to internal recruitment, but from the outside things work very well.

### **Feedback points**

- 1) Look internally first to fill vacancies – especially if the workforce will be shrinking due to efficiencies.
- 2) Always give the option for people who aren't comfortable with computers to have a paper application form.
- 3) Consider where else we could advertise and find suitable applicants within the community – e.g. within the school community by using noticeboards etc..
- 4) Internally - we need a mechanism to allow people to see internal vacancies as there is a barrier currently for all internal people. We need to decide on a method of advertising better. Perhaps something people sign up to, to receive updates. People can either just register an e-mail or text and receive all jobs, or it could be tailored to suit people's specific skill or interests.
- 5) SSC processes – they take too long and we lose people due to the time it takes to recruit i.e. 3-6 months depending upon post.
- 6) Too much time delay between finding a suitable candidate and the start date – particularly for internal candidates
- 7) Job descriptions and person specs too detailed
- 8) We need to make people redundant if needed and not tie ourselves in knots to squeeze them into vacancies

### **SELECTION**

#### **1) The interview experience.**

- a) **How did you find the interview? What would have made it better for you ?** (size of panel, environment, types of question, amount of probing etc.)
  - The parking at County Hall is very difficult. Stressful. In the letter it should say that you need to leave lots of extra time for finding a space.
  - Mine was an internal interview and I knew the panel so that made it more difficult.
  - I was put at my ease.
  - All three times were good
  - The interviewers were kind and competent. I can still remember the questions even years later.
  - It was felt that often the interviewer asked questions that you had to have done the job to know the answer to. They might have been about something that you could quickly pick up in the job, but not getting the answer right meant that you wouldn't be assessed as suitable for the job.
  - Discussed what we should be looking for from prospective employees in interviews – general agreement that should be looking for personal attributes that can't be taught in the job – like general attitude and

approach to work, interpersonal skills. Council policies and procedures might be able to 'picked up' on the job.

- Questions should be more related to the person and what they can do than specific technical details of the job (unless these are really essential for the job and can't be quickly picked up).
- Sometimes questions not in plain English so confusing. Sometimes had to ask manager to repeat the question.
- Sometimes 'what would you do if....' questions were difficult – if you didn't do the job already, you were only guessing – although it was accepted that it was trying to make you think.
- Interviewers with their heads down making notes was off putting at times as it felt like they were not listening.
- Some people felt that they should have been asked to prove their qualifications at interview.
- Panels – two or three people on a panel was OK – 3 people was starting to get a bit big and off putting.
- Body language was really important, particularly eye contact.
- When interviews had been in a more informal setting e.g. sitting on comfy chairs in a circle, it had felt much better than across a desk. Everyone felt that being interviewed across a table was too formal.
- The ideal environment was a small room with no noise or other distractions.
- Being shown round the work place afterwards was helpful.
- Questions asked rigidly with no follow up or probing seemed off putting. Generally the interviewing managers had been encouraging and drew out the information they needed.
- More conversational approach gets more information out of people.
- The chance to add anything else at the end of the interview is really helpful.
- Questions must be relevant to the job – this was felt to be really important. They must link in to the job and person profile.
- We can remember the days when a panel of interviewers was 5 people. Usually now its 2 people, but this changes depending on job and location.
- Sometimes it's trial or ordeal by interview i.e. people have two interviews, tests and then back for informal chats. It's sometimes too much.
- Tests are used for admin, managerial etc., but the nature of the test changes depending on the job. Tests are useful as they give the candidate an insight into the job and the manager an insight into how a potential employee tackles problems. Better sometimes than the interview itself.
- There are some bad experiences i.e. County Hall is not designed for interviews, there are not enough rooms to hold interviews outside of people's office and you can get distractions i.e. people coming into the interview room, phones ringing etc. parking is not good, not disabled accessible.

- Not keen on personality testing, but psychometric (if it's not named psychometric testing, just selection assessment) is better.
- b) **What's your experience of receiving interview feedback within the council? How satisfied have you been with the timing, quality and style of feedback you've received?** (e.g. written, phone, in person, areas covered etc..).
- Feedback is important.
  - Feedback is difficult to give and there should be training to cover this so that people are good at it.
  - Some people had never asked for it. One person who had received very short feedback in hindsight thought they should have asked for more detail.
  - One person felt that the council gave much more in depth feedback than many other companies, whether by telephone, e-mail or letter.
  - Feedback to candidates needs to be improved as often the candidate has to chase the manager for feedback.
  - People don't know if not shortlisted for a post or even why.
  - Often when it comes to interviews, the candidate themselves know when it all went wrong.
  - I feel sceptical about feedback as if the interview had a preferred candidate already a lot of interviews are pre-determined and they're just looking for an excuse as to why sometime didn't get the job.
  - Could we get feedback on application forms.

## **2) Other selection techniques in addition to an interview**

### **a) Did you have any sort of test as part of your interview/ selection process? If so how did you feel about it and how effective do you think it was at testing your suitability for the job?**

- I had to copy out a passage and read out a poem (relevant to job as registrar)
- I had to do a paper sifting exercise
- I had to do a mock telephone call
- I had to do a speed typing exercise
- I had to do a Microsoft test which you needed to be an insider to do well at but they helped you with it so it was OK. It should be a level playing field. Tests need to be designed carefully.
- Important to give an overall picture of someone
- Assessment centres are either really good or really bad.
- People thought there were benefits in using a test as well as finding out whether you can do the job, it gives the candidate an opportunity to find out if the job is for them.
- Several people had experience of ICT tests, using excel and PowerPoint as these have been relevant for the post.

- General view that it is better to do the test before the interview as it spurs you on in the interview, and gives you an opportunity to discuss how you think you have got on.
- The best person at interviewing gets the job, not the best person for the job. Tests are a good idea and allows managers to check on a person's abilities prior to starting the job.
- Tests were used, different ones depending on the job that was being advertised. However, no feedback was received off test, just off the interview.
  - a. If you just had an interview what else could have been done to assess how suitable you were for the job?
- Having questions based on how to deal with how to tackle problems, rather than being specific small areas of questions that just ask how you would do one specific tasks. Need to know people's approach to things and how they solve problems, not just how they cook/answer the phone as those things can be taught.

**b) Do you have any experience of psychometric or personality tests being used in recruitment? If so how would you feel about them being used within the council?**

- Some psychometric tests are excellent and some aren't. You need to find the appropriate one for the job. No one test can do it all.
- You would have to think carefully about what they were used for.
- They are best used to get feedback for people so that they can learn about themselves, e.g. for writing a CV.
- I've used them in the private sector for customer facing jobs. You can use them to screen people out.
- There are lots of variations. No overall test will be right for DCC. Needs different tests for different jobs.
- They are good for learning about interaction with other people.
- We don't use them for recruitment. They are better for finding out about people and how to work in a team. They are better used after recruitment. We use them as part of induction to help the manager lead the team, to get it to gel.
- Not relevant for recruitment.
- People had heard of psychometric tests but had not done them.
- If it helps identify the most suitable person for the job, and means the decision is based just on experience, in principle it is a good idea.
- It was suggested that it might fit in with fitting employees to internal vacancies.
- Have had psychometric testing for other places, usually blue chip or other councils or big employers i.e. boots/imperial tobacco/rolls Royce.
- Have experienced full assessment days where rooms of people were being assessed throughout the day and people were slowly removed from the process until the successful candidate was left.

- Psychometric tests work, however, employees are scared of them, as it's a 'test'. Would be better if it was named something else.
- People should never be forced to take psychometric tests if they're related to their personality. Only job focused ones are OK.
- People are scared of them.

### **3) Individual needs and potential barriers to the recruitment process.**

**Think about the different issues or barriers people may have to overcome when applying for jobs. E.g. finding formal paperwork and processes intimidating feeling uncomfortable using online recruitment processes, feeling that the council is not somewhere that 'people like them' work and that they would not fit in etc...**

**a) Thinking about this, how do you think we could remove barriers preventing the best people applying for and getting jobs within the council? Are there any groups of people e.g. young people, disabled people – who experience specific barriers, and what are they?**

- No specific groups were identified. There was a discussion around the fact that the group did not favour the idea of 'quotas' for specific groups and thought that the council had these. Everyone should have a fair chance.
- It was felt that the council was supportive of disabled people.
- Internally people face barriers as they are unaware that jobs are being advertised, except if they have been told face to face
- We are not good at recruiting younger people as the council is not seen as an attractive option. We know we have apprentices, but we should go to schools more.
- Our adverts are old fashioned and the person spec and job descriptions are lengthy. Often specific qualifications are listed that are not needed and so people don't apply for a job even if they have years of experience, creating a barrier.
- The recruitment system used to save CV's online as well as previous applications, but now it doesn't. This is therefore a barrier because candidates don't want to keep re-typing their basic information repeatedly.
- We could deter candidates through not advertising in wider areas than just the website. However, we all need to consider costs of advertising.
- People send generic application forms into the council rather than reading the job description.
- Parking is bad, barrier for disabled people.
- Online processes deter some people.
- The length of the recruitment process deters some people.
- Interviews don't suit everyone, so we need more testing as part of the recruitment process i.e. if someone can't talk very well, but the job is



computer based, the interview process would not suit them, but a test would.

**b) Can you share any personal experience of feeling that the recruitment and selection process made it difficult for you to apply for or demonstrate that you were suitable for a job?**

- Being aware that there is a 'favourite' for the job puts you off applying. This isn't always the best person for the job, but someone who is more 'political'.
- Overly complicated job and person profiles sometimes put you off – not clear what the jobs about, and you think that you have to be able to do every point of the job profile. It's not always clear what the main part of the job is, and which bits of the job are the minor parts of the job.
- The best interviews are the ones that flow and although they have questions that they want answering they allow the candidate to talk through things in more of a conversation.
- Interviews are very formal and they stress people and some managers are answering phones and not making eye contact which throws people.
- Assessment days are really fun, and I think leads to the correct person being appointed but this method is not appropriate for every job.
- Who will work well with the team is equally important as who can do the job as some things can be taught, how to interact with the team can't be.
- I can understand sometimes a manager appointing someone who didn't do the best interview, but has done the job for a while and is doing it really well. Internal interviews are very hard and everyone knows each other.
- Could we offer trial days when the job can be experienced by potential candidates, and that way it's more of a two way process as well as they might say they don't want to be interviewed as the job is different to what they thought it would be.
- Interviewing is a skill and managers don't always get it right. Just because a person is a manager doesn't mean they are a good interviewer.
- Self-awareness / personable / friendly / open is important for interviewers.

**c) What parts of our recruitment and selection processes:**

**a. help ensure that the best candidates are considered**

- Where appropriate, stating that candidates will be considered who are 'willing to gain' a qualification helps reduce barriers to people without the qualification but who otherwise could do the job. Having said that it was thought that having a qualification does demonstrate your effort and ability to learn.

- reduce the amount of essential criteria and take into account transferrable skills. This makes shortlisting harder, but would put more value into the process.
- Make adverts clear and include details of what the job is rather than relying on person spec and job description as sometimes these are confusing. Two lines explaining what the role is and where it fits helps candidates decide whether to apply.
- Train managers on how to interview. It's a skill and managers just think they can do it. More training or support needs to be offered on how to select questions, how to interview and how to provide good feedback as if interview experience is bad for an internal candidate, they might not apply again for a different job that they would have been perfect for.

**b. deter good candidates? What do you think the barriers could be to specific groups' e.g. young people, people with disabilities?**

- Young people have a barrier. We over ask what we need – job description etc. Overcomplicate what we need. Too wordy.
- Transferable skills are important
- Sometimes the essential criteria aren't essential. Once someone was missing a quality but there were lots of other good things and he filled a gap in the team and brought other skills to it.
- Some of the newer qualifications used in person profiles are not familiar to the older generation, and it is difficult to know if the older qualifications they might hold are equivalent.
- Asking for specific council experience when this isn't really necessary excludes people who could do the job.
- The time it takes to be recruited deters good candidate, especially if the post is fixed term.
- Our application form is long and job description and person specs make things seem really complicated to outsiders.
- Younger people don't see us as trendy and deters them
- Older people don't like applying online and don't check website for vacancies so we are missing people there.
- County hall is not disabled friendly and a lot of council buildings aren't as they are not purpose built i.e. hearing loops, parking, stairs etc.
- We don't advertise in community magazines as they cost money, but sometimes this could be appropriate.
- Don't overdo what you are looking for as it puts people off (but sometimes that is deliberate to stop having too many applicants)
- Have more things as desirable not essential criteria.
- Disabled people have a barrier
- Apprenticeship scheme is good
- Being overqualified should not be a barrier

#### **4) Exit interviews/questionnaires.**

##### **a) What's your perception of exit interviews within the Council (can be based on yours or someone else's experience)?**

- No one had any experience of them within the council.
- Don't think anything happens with them do why complete them.
- What statistics are held on them? Does anything ever happen as a result of them saying something negative about someone i.e. manager.
- Managers don't always tell employees to complete them

##### **b) What would encourage people to give honest feedback when they leave?**

- To be honest the exit feedback must be anonymous, and not seen by the manager.
- A paper copy sent to your home address would be best.
- Knowing that something was going to be done.
- Knowing it means something
- Getting managers to tell employees to complete (not mandatory but explaining why they are important)
- If it's anonymous people can be freer to say what they think but sometimes it's not possible. You can't tackle issues if feedback is anonymised.
- People often don't want to burn their bridges – want a reference. It's sometimes difficult to say the truth.
- Things are often political in the council and people lower down don't realise that.
- Some people in the council haven't worked anywhere else and don't know any different. This applies to a lot of senior managers who have come up through the ranks on a time-served basis. There were lots of promotion opportunities in the past but not so much now. We need new blood.

#### **FEEDBACK POINTS**

- 1) We should be focusing more on what the potential and personal attributes of the candidates are rather than things that it would be reasonable to pick up on the job.
- 2) Practical tests that are relevant to the job are useful.
- 3) Generally, it was felt that in the current climate, talking about encouraging people into the council when it was likely to be shrinking its workforce, seemed slightly contradictory.
- 4) Invite letters need to make clear what the interview/selection process will entail
- 5) Need to consider how to help young people in getting jobs

- 6) There should be training for managers on recruitment and selection
- 7) The best person doesn't get the job, the best person at interviewing gets the job.
- 8) Trials in jobs would be helpful, rather than just an interview

## **Notes from Employee Network Group Consultation held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

Two HR facilitators

Six employee network group reps

### **Questions**

#### **4) Advertising.**

#### **e) How did you hear about your most recent job and where was it advertised?**

- Years ago, through papers.
- A while ago, I saw an internal job.
- Through structural change.
- Derbyshire Times.
- Internally through Green Sheets.

#### **f) What can we do to make the way we advertise job vacancies more attractive or accessible to people inside and outside the council? What puts people off wanting to apply for jobs?**

- We advertise jobs in DCC speak, or local government speak. People outside of the Authority don't understand it, i.e. abbreviations. People don't understand Adult Care is Social Services, or that Economy, Transport and Environment is more than just driving a bus. We use too much jargon.
- Adverts should list the location of the job, particularly if recruiting across the County.
- Pool recruitment should list all the locations available as an employee with access issues may not be able to travel to some places but would be interested in more local sites.
- We are too wordy. Adverts should be short, simple. Fonts are too tiny.
- Our job titles are confusing and to people outside of local government don't mean anything.
- We are a closed shop and there is a cultural barrier to people not inside the council.
- You have to learn to talk the talk before you can get a job here.
- We should be able to filter all schools jobs off our external jobs website.
- The website puts jobs into job type, however, if you are unaware of where jobs fit in the council this is something that excludes people external to the council.
- The job system is designed for our convenience rather than the person interrogating it/the end user.

- Adverts are designed for our convenience, not for those looking at the adverts – it puts people off applying if it doesn't give an accurate description of the job.
- People with learning difficulties prefer to look at pictures advertising jobs; we've done a pilot in the past which was quite successful. I know we can't advertise everything in easy read but this would help in some instances.
- If you look at other companies/recruitment websites i.e. Indeed, Total or Community Care, they allow you to filter job searches into pay scales, type of job, full time/part time, permanent or temporary etc. we should do the same.
- We are moving towards competency descriptions and this can exclude more people.
- We should look at entry level posts and what's required.
- Job families should accurately reflect the role – one employee moved departments as his job was seen as a business support role in one department and a technician role in another; same role but higher pay.
- Young people may not understand what the job title is and what the duties are.
- BME communities don't know how the council works or how to sell themselves to the council.

**g) Do we advertise in the right places - where else should we advertise?**

- We only advertise on the website and this is not enough. We need adverts in community magazines/diversity press. (what would be the cost??)
- The less recruitment we do as an authority, the better we should be at it.
- We should advertise jobs in the community, on notice boards in the Children's Centres, in libraries, in voluntary groups and in local schools.
- Schools could target parent/carers with a letter from the Headteacher.
- I didn't realise we advertise internally on DNET, I'm usually informed by word of mouth.
- Not everyone has access to computers. We still get white/yellow sheets in ETE department on vacancies.
- We should do active recruitment and go to job fairs.

**5) Recruitment processes – e.g. application forms, the shortlisting process, pre-employment checks.**

- Timescales are reasonable, and things are speeding up. DBS used to take months and now takes a few weeks.
- The problem that has arisen is that people are told not to put their resignation in until all checks are cleared by the SSC. If people are moving internally, once all checks come back, the recruiting manager starts pressuring the current manager to release the employee into the new job, and the employee and

managers feel pressure all around. If someone has a job externally they feel pressure but don't want to put their notice in until all checks are cleared and sometimes you can't wait and end up putting your notice in before all checks come back. The problem is that you can't be guaranteed to be able to rescind your resignation. Authority should have a rule that says you can.

**a) How positive do you feel having been through the recruitment process – why? What could have been improved?**

- The problem is that people are already lined up for jobs and so what is the point of applying. This place is a closed shop and its jobs for the boys. When a job is advertised everyone goes 'oh that's \_\_\_\_ job'...
- There's no point in applying, if your face fit's you get the job and it's already pre-determined.
- It's a case of dead man's shoes – you progress when someone dies. If you are in favour, you gain promotion; if not, you stay where you are.
- We need to improve the process so it's smoother. Not such a huge gap between people leaving and getting new staff in.
- There should be a limit on the number of supplementary sheets candidates submit as one candidate sent in 11 pages. The guidance should state no more than 2 sides of an A4 sheet.
- Some departments are incestuous with family members gaining jobs.

**b) What were the timescales like for your recruitment? Do things progress quickly enough?**

- They were fine. Some delays, but nothing different to anywhere else.
- I didn't hear anything for 2 months and I thought I wasn't shortlisted. Often people will throw all the information away, especially if they are applying for multiple jobs.
- I applied for an internal job in November and I didn't have an interview until the following March.
- One successful candidate was asked if they could start in 2 weeks. It was an internal appointment and it was negotiated they could start early but then they didn't have IT system/servers set up and no email account. We lost him and the new department weren't ready for him.
- An issue is that you can't recruit until the employee hands in their notice.
- If you work in a school you have to give a term's notice.

**c) Considering the current financial situation the council is in, how do you think our recruitment processes need to change?**

- The IJM idea needs further development. It's a good idea, but we need to change the culture of DCC as managers will be

reluctant to take on people if they are being made redundant and also haven't worked in that particular service area before. I think managers will be the main barrier.

- Knowledge and skills need to be transferrable and who makes that decision, it's hard to decide what is possible to be transferred and what isn't.
- Will there only be temporary jobs available in the future?
- When employees leave tasks are split between existing staff and affects their morale/health, safety and welfare.
- When employees leave they are sometimes replaced with agency workers and this costs more money.

d) How would you feel about the council doing more to fill jobs internally wherever possible, for example using an automatic matching system which matches employees to vacancies, like Nottingham City Council do?

- How are we going to get a diverse workforce if we only recruit internally. We need some new blood and need to recruit younger staff.
- What if someone signing up to IJM is seen negatively by that person's manager, i.e. the manager thinks, oh \_\_\_\_\_ wants to leave, so I'm not going to train or develop them and if I have to make people redundant, I shall select that person as they want to leave anyway.
- Some employees may not be supported to move.

e) If you needed a DBS check did the process go smoothly? Were there any delays with any of the pre-employment checks?

- DBS has been slow in the past, but things are speeding up and will get quicker with e-bulk.

**6) Satisfaction with correspondence.**

e) **Did you have enough notice of your interview and did the correspondence contain all the information you needed?**

- Correspondence is OK.
- Correspondence is OK if you can read though and some people can't.

f) **How easy to understand was the paperwork you received at any stage of the process and were there any errors in it?**

- Easily understood as long as you don't have communication problems with reading.

g) **If you had any queries were you able to chase things up easily i.e. contact on letters etc?**

- Nil response.

h) **How could the correspondence you received have been improved?**

- Not send reams of policies with the contract letter.

## **SELECTION QUESTIONS**

### **5) The interview experience.**

#### **c) How did you find the interview? What would have made it better for you ? (size of panel, environment, types of question, amount of probing etc.)**

- Interviews are hard on people with dyslexia especially if you have two or three part questions as you can't always remember all parts of the questions. Interviewers should split questions up as working memory is not good for everyone.
- The level of interview can be variable as it depends on who does it.
- You can tell if the interviewer is not interested in you as you go through the interview. If they have someone they want to give the job to, why advertise. Why not just do succession planning and be open about it, as otherwise it's a waste of everyone's time. We need to be transparent, genuinely fair and open.
- Managers score interviewees how they want to get the person they want into the job – it's a farce.
- It's hard being interviewed by someone you know and it's awkward and false. It's hard because they already know what you can and can't do and ask you to recount everything as if you don't know them.
- The only way to have an impartial interview is to have an interviewing panel that do all jobs across the council.
- I have received an offensive comment from a recruiting manager before and not felt able to challenge it.
- It can be difficult if an interviewer has set answers and you give concrete examples that they haven't covered, how will this affect their scoring system?
- How you perform in an interview doesn't tell you how you are going to perform in the job.
- Service users sometimes attend interviews.

#### **d) What's your experience of receiving interview feedback within the council? How satisfied have you been with the timing, quality and style of feedback you've received? (e.g. written, phone, in person, areas covered etc..)**

- Feedback is not accurate as the interviewer often knows who they want to have the job prior to the interview and so it's just not accurate.