







JSCC Discussion: Attracting and rewarding scarce talent

The employment market conditions are impacting many sectors, and this presents challenges for us in recruiting to several job roles – including some which were previously relatively easy to fill. As a result, the HR team have been actively working to improve how we can attract and reward job applicants.

Advertising

We have reviewed how and where we advertise our vacancies to ensure we reach a wider target audience. Working with the Communications team, our social media advertising has been refreshed and is pitched as being more friendly and approachable, and less formal. We have been trialling a new style advert (see below) using photos of NHC employees to create impact and increase audience engagement. These adverts have been used on the council's pages for LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and we encourage recruiting managers to share these posts more widely on their own social media to increase the range.

 Come and work with us		 Come and work with us	
We're looking for a Service Director - Housing and Environmental Health	You'll need to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Have strong leadership skills✓ Understand our statutory functions✓ Be able to challenge the status quo✓ Have experience of collaboration with colleagues and external partners 	We're looking for a Waste Contracts Officer	You'll need to have... <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A full driving licence✓ Experience in customer care✓ Ability to work under pressure✓ Enthusiasm and commitment✓ Ability to deal with complaints 

The standard template for our website advert has also been reviewed to highlight the benefits of working for us, along with an updated statement on equality, diversity, and inclusion. This advert format can also be used on specialist jobs boards when required.

Benefits

We can attract job applicants by promoting the key benefits of working for us. Our staff really appreciated many of our benefits, so we now ensure these are highlighted in our advertising. These include the pension scheme, generous annual leave, occupational sick pay, free onsite car parking, 50% off leisure membership and flexible working options including flexi scheme and homeworking.

Flexible working and the ability to work from home are important factors to many job applicants, and it is vital that we promote the high level of flexibility which is possible in many of our jobs. When we make this clear at both the advertising and interview stages of recruitment, we will become the employer of choice for more applicants.

We have always been supportive of flexible working hours for existing employees, and we have now extended this to new starters. Job adverts include the wording *"Hours: 37 (full-time) open to flexible working patterns and hours"* so that applicants can request an alternative working pattern or working hours and discuss these with the recruiting managers. Last year, the HR team worked with a manager to facilitate a term-time only contract that had been requested by a candidate at their job interview.

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Likewise, for many of our employees, the option to work from home has been a benefit for over 10 years. We now encourage managers to consider how many office days are needed for their job vacancy, and to give guidance in their job adverts so applicants are aware of how often they will need to commute. For job roles where the average requirement is one or two office days per week, the vacancy is likely to be attractive to candidates from a wider geographical area.

Reward

It can be difficult to compete with the private sector on salary, which is why it is important for us to focus on other benefits, but we aim to be transparent when advertising and always include the minimum and maximum for the appropriate salary band on the website. Whilst we await the pay award, we also state that our pay award is pending. In addition, the recruitment and retention incentives policy was reviewed last year, and now includes guidance for managers on using market supplements and welcome payments for job that are deemed to be “hard-to-fill”.

Career development

We have a great record with training and development, and many of our employees have developed their careers with us, moving between job roles (sometimes across service areas) and progressing in seniority as their skills and experience grow. Our popular apprenticeship scheme helps us to bring in young people, and those looking for a career change, and develop their skills from the grass-roots level. Many of our apprentices stay with us and move into permanent job roles when they complete their apprenticeships.

In areas such as Planning, Environmental Health and Legal Services where the difficulty in recruiting can be extremely difficult, we can make use of training schemes and career-graded roles which provide clear career paths for professional qualifications and progression. We currently have one Trainee Solicitor in post, with another one due to start shortly, two graduate Planning Officers and are interviewing for a career graded Food Safety Officer post which will support a Technical Officer to train and progress to a qualified Environmental Health Officer.