

Discussion Paper: Recruitment Update

Since the pandemic, employment market conditions have presented challenges for us in recruiting into several service areas, including some which were previously relatively easy to fill. As a result, the HR team have been working to improve how we can attract and recruit candidates.

Although the ONS labour market overview for May 2024 shows an ongoing downward trend for vacancies, they remain above pre-pandemic levels. This means we continue to operate in a competitive environment for good quality candidates.

Attracting candidates

Social media adverts

In an effort to increase visibility of our vacancies, working with the Communications team, we have developed the format for social media adverts which includes some key bullet points and an employee photo, linking to the NHC jobs page.



North Herts Council

Come and work with us

We're looking for a **Service Director-Housing and Environmental Health**

You'll need to...

- ✓ Have strong leadership skills
- ✓ Understand our statutory functions
- ✓ Be able to challenge the status quo
- ✓ Have experience of collaboration with colleagues and external partners

Website

The recruitment pages of our website are being updated to provide a more informative and welcoming approach. The new pages will include:

- Increased video content
- Images of our employees at work
- Content explaining why we are a good employer
- A section on what our people say
- Information on selected teams
- Improved content on how to apply

We have adjusted the wording for our adverts and consider options for advertising on a per post basis.

Career Development

In some areas where posts are hard to fill, national skills shortages impact on our ability to recruit. We consider creating career graded roles to enable us to grow our own.

Our website, adverts and social media posts highlight our commitment to learning and opportunities to develop at the Council.

Modernising documents and processes

We continue to update our processes and documents to make the recruitment process as easy and effective as possible for both candidates and recruiting managers. We have merged our job description and person specification document to one, more user-friendly job profile.

The wording of other documents has been adjusted to be more welcoming and friendly whilst still providing clarity for candidates.

Flexible approaches to filling vacancies – some examples:

- Created a new term-time only contract when requested at interview, to secure a high-quality candidate who had the experience and qualifications for a hard-to-fill role.
- Developed a trainee / entry-level grade for a role when a recruitment campaign showed us there were no applicants with the right level of skills and experience.
- Trialled the use of Public Practice agency to source highly-skilled and experienced professionals for hard-to-fill roles in planning.

What's next?

Improved recruitment system

Our current recruitment tool is outdated, and work has started to review options for an alternative, more modern solution.

Candidate information pack

Candidate feedback has shown that we could provide more information about working for the Council at an earlier stage of the recruitment process and so we will be creating an online candidate information pack for applicants.

Process improvement

Processes will continue to be reviewed and automated where possible.

Trial of transparent interviews

A trial of transparent interviews has started, and we will collate feedback from both candidates and recruiting managers. Feedback so far has been positive.

Local government recruitment campaign

We will be engaging with the East of England Local Government Association on the national roll out of the local government recruitment campaign.