



Recruitment and Selection Policy

January 2026



Contents

Page

1. Introduction	3
2. Filling of Vacancies	4
3. Recruitment Panel	6
4. Selection	6
5. Offer of Appointment	8
6. Pre-Employment Medical Questionnaires	8
7. References	9
8. Appointment of Former Employee	9
9. Canvassing of Council Members or Officers	9
10. Relocation	9
11. Post Interview Feedback	9
12. Recruitment and Selection Complaints Procedure	9
13. Monitoring of Recruitment	10
14. Temporary Workers	10
15. Agency Workers	10

Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Revision	Responsible Person	Review Date
1	May 2019	Revised format and changes to terminology to reflect online processes	L Boyd	May 2020
2	Sept 2022	Revised format, updates related to online resources, 'Recruit with Convictions' and change to Head of service job title.	N Cecconi	Sept 2023
3	Jan 2026	Policy revised to reflect update to Talentlink recruitment process, Protected Characteristics	L Boyd	June 2027

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Ayrshire Council recognises the fundamental role that its employees play in achieving corporate aims and objectives and understands the importance of ensuring that the correct individuals are recruited and retained. The Recruitment and Selection policy aims to attract appropriate candidates, provide equality of opportunity, and enable a thorough assessment of competence to be undertaken.
- 1.2 Additionally, through a rigorous and robust selection process, safeguards for working with vulnerable members of our community will also be provided as procedures recognise the additional statutory requirements that are required and the more intensive level of assessment of candidates that will be needed.
- 1.3 The policy provides a framework through which a fair, consistent and lawful approach will be taken as the Council seeks to employ individuals who display the knowledge, skills, attitude, and behaviour that match its service delivery requirements and South Ayrshire's Values.
- 1.4 The Council's commitment to equality of opportunity for all is reflected in its Recruitment Charter. This includes a commitment as a Disability Confident employer, that where a disabled applicant clearly evidences in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the vacant role as set out in the job description, they may be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities at interview. Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout the recruitment and selection process to meet the needs of candidates with a disability. Also, alternative recruitment and promotional activities may be used to address areas of underrepresentation across the workforce.
- 1.5 Whilst not a protected characteristic recognised by the Equality Act, South Ayrshire Council recognises Care Experienced to be a protected characteristic. We recognise care experienced applicants as someone who has been formally looked after by a local authority, in the family home (with support from social services or a social worker), in kinship care with family, friends or relatives (including informal kinship care), foster care, residential or secure care or legally adopted. South Ayrshire Council will guarantee an interview where care experienced applicants meet the essential criteria for the job.
- 1.6 South Ayrshire Council is a Recruit with Conviction Ambassador and has undertaken work to ensure that people with convictions are treated within best practice guidelines when applying for work. All applicants are asked to declare any convictions within the current laws. Ambassadors promote safe and sustainable employment for people with convictions in their own workplace and seek to influence other workplaces too. Ambassadors will publicise and promote these procedures with partner organisations, sub-contractors and wider businesses or other networks.
- 1.7 Recruitment and selection should be:
- **Effective** – by ensuring sufficient suitable individuals are encouraged to apply and being able to distinguish between those who are suitable and unsuitable.
 - **Efficient** – by ensuring that advertising and recruitment methods are cost and time efficient.
 - **Impartial** – by ensuring that equality of opportunity is considered as an integral part of the procedure.
 - **Fair** – by dealing with all who apply fairly, honestly, and courteously.
- 1.8 It is fundamental that any qualifications or requirements applied to a job must be genuine and justifiable.
- 1.9 Each individual will be assessed according to their ability to undertake the duties and responsibilities of that job.

- 1.10 References will be requested for recommended candidates only and wherever possible, a reference will be obtained from someone who has current/recent experience of the candidate in a work situation. Where a candidate is in employment, one of the referees must be a current employer.
- 1.11 Employees and potential employees should feel comfortable and supported to apply for positions with South Ayrshire Council.
- 1.12 Where appropriate, employees will have access to training and development opportunities to achieve equality of employment potential.

2. Filling of Vacancies

2.1 When the decision is taken to fill a vacant post, consideration should be given to the post's suitability for flexible working as detailed below. Further details of the flexible working options are available on the Core at [Flexible working policy - The Core](#).

- Part Time
- Term Time
- Annualised Hours

2.2 Advertising

The recruitment market and relevant legislation demands flexibility in approaches to the advertising and filling of vacancies. The Chief HR Officer will ensure a consistent approach to the advertising and filling of posts.

2.2.1 Redeployment

When a post has been approved to fill, consideration will always firstly be given to the suitability of the post for any employee on the Council's Redeployment List. In certain situations, employees may require redeployment, for example, due to health or displacement following restructuring, and a process of skills/capability assessment can lead to a transfer to a suitable alternative vacant post.

If the post remains vacant following full consideration of its potential for redeployment, it should be advertised.

As a priority, employees requiring redeployment, will be given relevant training and support to maximise opportunities for redeployment.

2.3 Advertising Conditions

All other vacancies will be advertised according to the following conditions:

2.3.1 **Chief Officers:** Appointments to these posts are made by a Panel of Elected Members (Chief Officers' Appointments / Appraisal Panel).

The Recruitment and Contracts Team, will co-ordinate all appropriate arrangements for advertising and selection process.

2.3.2 **Head Teachers/Depute Head Teacher posts:** In accordance with the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, the Parents' Council must be informed and included in selection processes.

2.3.3 **Approval to Advertise:** Vacancies will be advertised after appropriate approval has been sought; the following conditions will need to be approved:

- Justification for filling the post;
- Advert text with grade/salary and interview date (if known);
- Statutory legislative requirements which may be relevant and should be referred to in the advert i.e., (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended); the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2006; provisions of Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended));
- Is the post Politically Restricted?
- Is the post subject to a Disclosure or PVG?
- Is the post subject to Police vetting?

2.3.4 **Internal advertising:** The Council encourages succession planning and career progression; therefore, vacancies can be restricted for internal promotion. Internal employees include:

- Temporary/Permanent employees
- Casual employees whether currently employed or not
- Modern Apprentices and employability programme participants

It will be for management to decide whether jobs should be advertised internally only in the first instance, or whether they should be the subject of simultaneous internal and external advertising.

Similarly, where a post has been advertised internally and only a small number of internal applications have been received, it will be for management to decide (regardless of whether person specification requirements are met), to proceed with interviews or advertise externally.

2.3.5 **External advertising:** All external adverts should comply with one of the following conditions:

- Post is of a specialist nature;
- Identification that there will be a limited response from internal applicants;
- Identification that the vacancy would benefit from exposure in the external market;
- The post is subject to a legal requirement under the terms of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 or a Joint Funding Partnership arrangement;
- Regulated work where advertising to the widest possible pool of applicants is recommended.

2.4 All vacancies will be advertised using the recruitment portal [Jobs | South Ayrshire Council | myjobscotland](#). In addition, the following advertising sources may be used:

- Local Job Centres.
- National and Local newspapers, relevant professional website and/or Journals.
- A range of alternative options, including posts, public flyers targeted at community groups, radio campaigns etc.

2.5 All applicants must complete an online application form. The Council can also provide an application form in various formats to meet the needs of individuals.

2.6 Where a vacancy arises which is the same post or a very similar post in terms of grade, duties and responsibilities, to one which has recently been advertised or filled, consideration can be given to filling the second vacancy from the initial group of applicants. Managers may go back a period of 12 weeks and select a candidate from a previous interview, provided that the interview took place no longer than 12 weeks prior. Advice should be sought from Human Resources when considering the timescales and similarities between the vacancies, and managers will be required to submit another vacancy request.

3. Recruitment Panel

3.1 Relationships/interests

Where an applicant for employment with the Council is related to an Elected Member of the Council, or to an employee, the officer within whose delegated authority it is to make the appointment to the post in question will, before exercising that authority, consult with the Chief HR Officer who may require the officer to refer the appointment to the Chief Executive for decision.

3.2 Panel Requirements

- Any employee or Elected Member participating in recruitment and selection must have completed the COAST online E-Learning module.
- A minimum of two panel members must be involved at all stages of the process and every effort will be made to ensure that the composition of recruitment panels reflects the Council's commitment to equality.
- Agreement should be reached at the outset on:
 - the values-based job description, including the person specification which must not be changed after the recruitment process has started; and
 - the use of relevant selection methods throughout the selection process, for example, assessment centres, ability tests, personality profiles, role plays, in-tray exercises and value-based interview questions.
 - All selection techniques and methods must be relevant and appropriate to the post in question and any forms of psychometric testing will be conducted by a suitably qualified Administrator or Assessor.
- The panel chairperson should be prepared to discuss any convictions that may be disclosed and take the lead when speaking to the applicant.
- In the section called 'Recruitment & Selection' on the Core, [Recruitment and Selection - The Core](#) Hiring Managers can find a range of useful information on the recruitment and interview process including:
 - Value Based Recruitment Matrices
 - Interview questions development examples
 - Interview question templates
 - Supporting documents for additional selection methods
 - Supporting documents for during the interview process

4. Selection

4.1 **Job Description:** The job description supports the assessment and selection process, and candidates will be assessed against the criteria set within it. The job description must:

- Outline the key purpose and accountabilities for the post or group of generic posts, including the person specification.
- Be prepared with reference to the relevant South Ayrshire Council values and behaviours, and the evidence required to demonstrate ability; and
- Be prepared in accordance with relevant legislation.

In line with the Council's Values and Behaviours framework, employees are expected to demonstrate Respectful, Positive, Supportive, Ambitious and Proud attributes in order to carry out the job effectively to an agreed standard.

Where a job description requires to be updated this should be discussed with HR for any possible job re-evaluation purposes.

- 4.2 **Selection Process:** the initial stage of the selection process will be the gathering of information about the applicant(s). The method of achieving this may vary but will normally include application forms, initial telephone screening or open days.

The online application form on My Job Scotland will use screening questions to aid the short-listing process by selecting applicants that meet the essential requirements of the role.

- 4.3 **Short Listing:** The selection panel will compare each application against those identified in the job description. The short list of candidates for interview requires consensus from the panel. All applicants that can clearly evidence in their application that they meet the essential criteria of the vacant role as specified in the job description, will be considered for shortlisting for interview. **Please refer to section 1.4 and 1.5 above regarding the Council's commitment to Disabled and Care Experienced applicants.**

Information relating to other protected characteristics and previous convictions will be withheld from the shortlisting process in line with the 2010 Equality Act and best practice as a Recruit with Conviction Ambassador.

- 4.3 **Selection Process:** the selection process (e.g. value-based interview, assessment centre, practical/in-tray exercise) will be designed around the Council's values and behaviours where candidates will be required to evidence the requisite attitude and behaviour identified for the role.

The following will apply:

- Other than in exceptional circumstances a minimum of one week's notice will be given to candidates prior to a selection event;
- Where an ability test or personality profile is used, candidates will receive feedback from the Administrator or Assessor during the selection event;
- If a candidate is unable to attend a selection event at the given time, reasonable effort will be made to reschedule. The decision to reschedule will lie with the panel chairperson who will consider factors such as the urgency in filling the post and the length of the delay;
- There may be circumstances when interviews cannot be arranged face to face. For example, if a candidate is not well enough to travel or is based outside of Scotland or the UK. In these situations, the decision to offer an online interview will lie with the panel chairperson who will consider if the format of the assessment is suitable for online interviews and will not place the other candidates at disadvantage.
- Candidates attending a final selection event, must be prepared to discuss at interview, any queries in relation to their Convictions Declaration Form or Letter of Disclosure with the panel chairperson.
- The panel should, when discussing information, seek to understand any factors involved in applicants offending, time since offending and what effort the individual has undertaken to demonstrate they are unlikely to return to these patterns of behaviour;
- It is acceptable for the panel chairperson to ask questions related to the information they are provided with by the applicant (e.g. if the applicant states they were under the influence of drugs during offending, then it is acceptable to enquire about any recovery activities or abstinence programmes they have or continue to use). It would not be acceptable to ask about alcohol consumption unless the applicant had disclosed that they offended under the influence of alcohol.

- A guidance for the Recruitment of ex-Offenders is available for managers on the Core, [Recruitment and selection policy - The Core](#). As part of the Council's commitment to Safer Recruitment, panels must scrutinise application forms and seek reasons for any breaks in employment;
- All external candidates attending a final selection event must provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the United Kingdom by providing their original right to work documentation at interview;
- All selection events must be conducted in a fair, consistent, structured and systematic manner; Candidates must be evaluated against the criteria and scoring mechanism contained in the selection profile;
- An assessment of each candidate must be made following the event using the Selection/Interview Assessment form, the panel chairperson is responsible for facilitating the panel discussion and collating the comments to agree on the recommended candidate. There should only be one interview assessment form for each candidate completed by the panel chairperson.
- Where the post requires possession of a particular qualification or registration with an appropriate body, evidence must be produced at interview, which in the case of a required qualification must be the original certificate.

5. Offer of Appointment

- 5.1 Normally the recommended candidate will be contacted as soon as is practicable after the interview and be told verbally that they are the recommended candidate for the post, subject to receipt of satisfactory references and completion of other checks. This will be followed by a formal written offer of appointment. The recruitment panel chairperson will advise all unsuccessful candidates by email within 2 weeks following the interview date.
- 5.2 The formal written offer of appointment which summarises the main terms and conditions of employment will be issued upon the receipt of satisfactory reference(s) and successful completion of the required checks. The recommended candidate will be given 14 days to accept the offer and return the appropriate paperwork. If the offer is not accepted within the timescale, it will be withdrawn.
- 5.3 All appointments will be made at the first point of the relevant salary scale. In exceptional circumstances, an appointment may be made to a higher point with the approval of the Chief HR Officer.
- 5.4 Where the post is considered to be Regulated Work as specified in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) (PVG) Act 2007, the recommended candidate will be required to become a member of the PVG scheme, or undergo a PVG scheme update if already a scheme member, prior to any formal offer being made. Candidates who are being recruited from outwith the Council will be required to meet the PVG registration costs.

6. Pre-Employment Medical Questionnaires

- 6.1 **External Candidates:** Following the selection process, a health questionnaire will be completed by the recommended candidate and will be screened by the Council's Occupational Health service.
- 6.2 **Internal candidates:** Where an existing employee moves from one post to a similar post e.g. clerical to clerical, there will be no need for pre-employment screening. However, where there is a basic difference in the types of tasks undertaken between the new and former posts e.g. administration to home care, a pre-employment medical questionnaire will be completed by the employee in question for screening by the Council's Occupational Health service.

7. References

- 7.1 Reference(s) will be obtained for the recommended candidate only. Wherever possible a reference will be obtained from someone who has current/recent experience of the candidate in a work situation and where a candidate is in employment, one of the referees must be a current employer. This might include unpaid or voluntary work.

Further detailed guidance on the use of references is contained within the managers handbook, here [Recruitment and selection policy - The Core](#).

8. Appointment of Former Employees

- 8.1 Only in exceptional circumstances and normally only to a post to which it is difficult to recruit, will a contract of employment be offered to an individual who left the employment of the Council on the grounds of Voluntary Severance (VS) or Voluntary Early Retirement (VER). In all cases the approval of the Chief HR Officer must be given.

9. Canvassing of Council Members or Officers

- 9.1 Any applicant who canvasses an Elected Member or employee of South Ayrshire Council, directly or indirectly, in relation to recruitment will be immediately disqualified. Similarly Elected Members and employees will not solicit for an appointment for any person, although this does not preclude the provision of a reference if requested to do so.

10. Relocation and Expenses

- 10.1 In limited circumstances, assistance with relocation will be offered to successful candidates in accordance with the Council's Conditions of Service. The decision as to whether or not relocation expenses will apply will be taken by the Chief HR Officer prior to advertising. The Council does not reimburse travelling expense to candidates attending for interview but may arrange an online interview depending on the role and interview format.

11. Post Interview Feedback

- 11.1 Post interview feedback will not be given automatically however, it will be made available on request.
- 11.2 For applicants who have disclosed a conviction, feedback on whether the conviction was the deciding factor will be made explicit.

12. Recruitment and Selection Complaints Procedure

- 12.1 South Ayrshire Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and will endeavour to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment throughout the recruitment and selection process. Accordingly, applicants who think they have been treated less favourably than other applicants, or who feel they have been the subject of discrimination during the recruitment and selection process, are entitled to complain. Anyone wishing to complain, should write to the Chief HR Officer within 14 days of being advised of the outcome of their application.

Complaints will be investigated by an independent Council officer and a response issued normally within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint, there will be no further right of appeal.

- 12.2 In certain circumstances the Chief HR Officer can decide to suspend the recruitment process pending the outcome of a complaint.

13. Monitoring of Recruitment

- 13.1 As part of the application process, those who apply will be asked to provide equalities information. The information provided will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment policy and will not be divulged to the selection panel.
- 13.2 In line with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recommendations, the Council will regularly analyse the composition of the workforce; the results of which will be used to measure the effectiveness of the Equality at Work Policy and, where appropriate, to develop appropriate positive action programmes.
- 13.3 Recruitment documentation will be kept for a period of six months following completion of the recruitment process and then will be securely destroyed.

14. Temporary Workers

Recruitment of temporary workers will be undertaken in the same way as recruitment of permanent employees. Further information is available from Human Resources.

15. Agency Workers

In certain extreme circumstances i.e. imminent service breakdown, it may be possible to use Agency Workers. Approval for the use of Agency Workers is detailed in the Agency Workers Protocol, information is available from Human Resources.