Recruitment During COVID-19 Pandemic

Guidance for Managers and HR

The following guidance is based on the information contained in the [Emergency Redeployment During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and the [COVID-19 Emergency Workforce Arrangements](#)

1. Recruitment of Supply Staff to Fixed Term contracts (Key Worker Posts only)

This process applies where staff are being offered a fixed term contract for the same position that they are currently undertaking supply work for. If supply staff are being offered a fixed term contract in a different area the Internal Redeployment procedure below should be followed.

- No requirement to advertise post
- No requirement for individual to complete an application form
- No requirement for internal references to be sought
- Change form should be sent to HRchanges@westlothian.gov.uk . Managers **must** note on the change form that the reason for the post is COVID-19 emergency cover
- Change form actioned in CHRIS and i-Trent by HR Support/Payroll
- HR Support issue fixed term contract (COVID-19 cover)

2. Internal Redeployment

- No requirement to advertise post
- Where an individual is being redeployed to undertake regulated work employing service must ensure appropriate PVG check is in place. The ability to redeploy an individual pending a PVG check ceases with effect from 1st April 2022.
- Change form (including the proposed end date for the temporary redeployment) should **only** be sent to HRChanges@westlothian.gov.uk **if** one of the following applies
  - **Increase** in grade
  - **Increase** in hours of work
  - A **new** allowance is payable
- If change forms are received that do not meet these criteria HR Support will contact the manager to advise no change form is required.
- Change actioned in CHRIS and i-Trent by HR Support/Payroll
- HR Support issue a contractual change letter

3. External Recruitment

(i) Recruitment to Specific Posts

- Key Worker posts do not require to be authorised by Head of Service or EMT and should be authorised by the relevant Service Manager (authorisation can take the form of an email from the relevant Service Manager with the vacancy authorisation form attached if it is not possible for the vacancy authorisation form to be signed). The process for advertising these will be
  - Recruiting manager sends vacancy authorisation form, advert, job outline and person spec to recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk
  - HR Support add vacancy to Talentlink and make live as soon as possible following receipt
  - Applicants will complete the standard application via Talentlink

- o Managers will access applications forms and notify recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk of interviews, regrets and appointments in the normal manner

- Non-key worker posts still require to be authorised by Head of Service (as above email confirmation will be acceptable) and EMT. Process for advertising these posts will be
  - o Recruiting manager sends vacancy authorisation form, advert, job outline and person spec to recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk
  - o HR Support add these to a list (in the form of a spreadsheet) to go to EMT
  - o Spreadsheet emailed to Chief Executive Office in line with existing bulletin schedules along with copies of the vacancy authorisation forms (photograph if not received electronically)
  - o Feedback provided to recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk about whether posts can be advertised and posts then added to Talentlink as appropriate and made live in line with the existing bulletin schedule
  - o Applicants will complete the standard application via Talentlink
  - o Managers will access applications forms and notify recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk of interviews, regrets and appointments in the normal manner

(ii) General Adverts

Services may wish to place adverts looking to recruit staff across a number of areas and/or build up a bank of staff they can call on as and when required rather than being limited to specific vacancies.

In these circumstances discussion should be held with the service, relevant Senior HR Adviser and HR Support Team Leader to determine the most appropriate way of placing the advert and managing the responses.

(iii) Appointment/Pre-employment Checks

The COVID-19 Emergency Workforce Planning document makes provision for conditional appointment to posts pending the normal pre-employment checks. This should only be done where it is essential to the delivery of critical services. Where posts involve work with vulnerable groups it is essential that managers put in place a risk assessment and any other relevant safeguards before considering starting an employee without all pre-employment checks being completed.

Managers should continue to notify recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk of successful candidates. The following is recommended for each of the following pre-employment checks.

(a) Pre-employment medical

These are currently done online and are being processed as normal by occupational health.

HR Support will continue to email the link to the online questionnaire to successful candidates and notify the recruiting manager when the pre-employment medical is returned.

Managers will be able to start an employee prior to receiving confirmation from HR Support that the pre-employment medical has been received.

(b) References

References should still be sought, particularly where the post is governed by SSSC safer recruitment guidelines.

Managers may request telephone references. Where this is done the manager should document the discussion using the reference template which is available on MyToolkit at https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/33208/Recruitment-and-Selection-Forms and return this to recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk

Managers will be able to start an employee prior to the receipt of 2 references (where the employee is to be undertaking regulated work a minimum of 1 employer reference must be received before an employee starts work). Where 2 references are not received prior to an employee starting work, the recruiting manager must ensure that these are followed up and obtained as soon as possible. HR Support will monitor this and advise managers where references remain outstanding.

(c) PVG Check

The ability to employ someone prior to a PVG check being returned ceases with effect from 1st April 2022. Where a post requires a PVG check managers must ensure that the appropriate check is completed and returned prior to the successful candidate taking up employment

(d) Right to Work checks

Right to work documentation would normally be checked by the recruiting manager at the interview however this is not possible where interviews are conducted online or via telephone. In recognition of this an alternative process has been put in place by the home office. The revised process is as follows

- The candidate should submit a scanned copy or a photo of their original documents via email or using a mobile app to the recruiting manager
- At interview, or via a subsequent video call with the candidate, the recruiting manager should ask the candidate to hold up the original documents to the camera and check them against the digital copy of the documents
- The recruiting manager should record the complete the Right to Work Verification Form (COVID-19) [link] and send this to recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk along with the digital copy of the documentation.

As it continues to be a criminal offence to employ an individual who does not have the right to work in the UK, offers of employment will not be processed until this documentation has been received.

e) SSSC Registration

There is normally a six-month period after starting work to obtain registration. In accordance with the emergency Coronavirus Bill this has been increased to 12 months once employment has commenced.

HR Services
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