

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Please read the important information in these guidance notes prior to completing and submitting your application

All our documents are available in large print, Braille, another language or on a cassette, for candidates with disabilities. To request them please call us on 01785 276480.

- You must complete the online application form to apply for Staffordshire County Council vacancies.
- Please note that you can get online at libraries across Staffordshire – see details here: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/librariesnew/branchlibraries/>
- You can also access the internet on the Staffordshire Jobs Bus – call 07971 994124 to find out when it is visiting an area close to you.
- You can also call UK Online free on 0800 77 1234 or text "online" and your post code to 80809 to find out local places with free internet access (texts cost 25p + your standard network charge).
- If you have a disability that means you are unable to apply online please contact the Resourcing team on 01785 276480.
- There is opportunity within the application to provide evidence of your experiences, skills and qualifications as related to the person specification. You may provide further details on additional sheets if required.
- Please ensure all gaps in employment and education history are fully explained on your application form. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities monitoring form. We are keen to ensure that our jobs are accessible to all members of the community and use this data to monitor our progress in doing this.
- Make sure you return your application form by the closing date.
- No applications will be accepted once the closing date has passed.
- After the closing date the applications will be passed onto the manager for short listing. If you have not received any notification from us within 28 days of the closing date please assume that your application was not successful.
- Please keep free any interview date given; it is not normally possible to re-arrange this date.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community and will be pleased to help meet any requirements arising as part of the recruitment process - we have an Interview Guarantee Scheme for people with a disability which guarantees an interview if you meet the criteria identified in the person specification.
- You will be asked to sign a copy of your online application form at interview.

Information about the County Council and its services can be found on our web site at www.staffordshire.gov.uk



References

The advert will advise whether a post is part of the Children's Workforce.

For posts that form the Children's Workforce references will be taken up before interview. To help us get references quickly please ensure that you provide us with details of referees who are contactable and available.

Where possible, you must provide one referee who can comment on your previous work with children.

For posts that are not part of the Children's Workforce your references will be taken up should you be the preferred candidate for the post

To help us get a quick response from referees, please provide e-mail addresses for your referees if possible and advise them that they may be asked to provide a reference for you if you are shortlisted for the post. When providing details please ensure that one relates, if applicable, to your present job, or most recent employer. If you have recently left full-time education, please ensure you include a Head Teacher/College/University Principal (or their representative) as one of your references.

Please state in what capacity the two referees are acting, e.g. current employer.

Please note that references from relatives or friends are not acceptable.

Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity across all service provision as well as in the employment of our staff. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and we welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

Our Equal Opportunities Strategy supports our commitment to promoting inclusion and the provision of high quality, accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse community, and we will work towards ensuring that our staff reflects the diversity of the community.

We will develop a culture where employees are treated as individuals, and where differences are welcomed and embraced. We believe that equality is the responsibility of all employees and every employee can influence how equality is achieved within the County Council. To deliver this we will create an awareness and understanding of equality by ensuring that training and development is an integral part of every employee's individual personal development.



As a fair and reasonable employer we aim to provide equality for all our employees. To achieve this we will:

- Promote and implement best practice in recruitment and selection practices, including taking positive action to address identified imbalances.
- Put in place a fair and transparent pay structure.
- Treat employees with dignity and respect, acknowledge strengths and help to overcome any weaknesses through individual personal development plans and reviews.
- Promote equality of access to training, development and promotion.
- Create a working environment that challenges and eradicates prejudice, harassment, unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- Consult with employees regarding wellbeing and work -life balance, implementing arrangements where they can be balanced with the needs of the Council.
- Make reasonable adjustments for employees.

The equalities policy is a living document and is reviewed every two years. We welcome your comments as part of this process. Any comments can be received via ccs.equalities@staffordshire.gov.uk

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1998 places responsibilities on us to process personal data that we hold in a fair and proper way. The Act came into force on 1 March 2000 and regulates the use of personal data, including any data you supply on this application form. The information you give us will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of personnel management.

Staffordshire County Council may contact other organisations (such as the Criminal Records Bureau, Job Centre Plus, previous employer(s), education establishments, etc) to check the factual information you have given on the application form. The information will be stored securely, both manually and electronically and destroyed after 12 months (maximum) if your application is unsuccessful.

If we offer you the position we will use some of the information you give us on the application form in your contract of employment. The information you give on the recruitment monitoring form will only be used to monitor the application of our equal opportunities policy and the effectiveness of our recruitment and advertising strategies.

Audit Commission Fair Processing Protocol

The authority is under a duty to protect funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided as part of the recruitment process for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

As part of this ongoing responsibility Staffordshire County Council participates in the Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative every two years. Key payroll and other data is used in a matching exercise to identify frauds, data errors etc; For further information please visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/nfi



Employment Terms & Conditions

Annual Leave

The majority of posts are subject to NJC terms and conditions of employment. Under these terms you will be entitled to a minimum of 24 days annual leave (excluding bank holidays). The amount of annual leave increases over time and is based on the level of your post and is pro rata for part time employees. Our annual leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March. In calculating your actual annual leave entitlement we take account of the length of continuous local government service you have as well as your basic salary.

New entrants to the service are entitled to annual leave proportionate to the completed months of service during the leave year of entry.

Please note, different annual leave arrangements apply to some categories of staff such as those employed on Soulbury, Teaching or JNC terms and conditions of service (for example School Inspectors or Youth Workers)

NJC Terms & Conditions

SALARY	0 - 4 yrs	5 - 14 yrs	15 – 24 yrs	25 yrs & over
Up to SCP 28	24	29	30	31
SCP 29 – 40	26	30	31	32
SCP 41 & over	27	31	32	33

Soulbury Terms & Conditions

Continuous Local Government Service			
0 – 4 Years	5 – 14 Years	15 – 24 Years	25 Years +
27	31	32	33

JNC Terms & Conditions

SALARY	0 - 4 yrs	5 - 14 yrs	15 – 24 yrs	25 yrs & over
Chief Officer	30	32	33	34

Public/Extra Statutory and Local Leave

As well as annual leave, our offices are closed on the following 9 days, and paid leave is granted to staff:

Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday

May Day (first Monday in May)

Late Spring Bank Holiday (Monday and Tuesday)

August Bank Holiday (Monday and Tuesday)

Christmas and Boxing Day

New Year's Day



Other Leave

Special leave arrangements also exist which cover bereavement, carer leave, adoption, maternity leave, work break, paternity leave and parental leave.

Working Hours

The standard working week for full-time staff is 37 hours. Wherever possible we operate a scheme of flexible working hours. Some of our positions are shift-based. Hours of work and shift patterns are usually indicated in the advertisement and application pack. Some posts are eligible for Job Sharing. This allows you to enjoy the benefits of a full-time post, with pro rata entitlement to salary and annual leave, sick pay, maternity leave and pension rights, while letting you balance the pursuit of a career with your other responsibilities and outside activities. Almost any job can be shared successfully. (Some jobs are not suitable for job sharing, but this will have been made clear when the job is advertised).

Politically Restricted Posts

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, imposes restrictions on political activity for certain local government employees. In some posts you cannot be an elected member of local authorities, an MP or MEP. This affects a minority of posts and you will be told if a post is politically restricted during the recruitment process.

Relationship to Members or Employees/Canvassing

You must tell us in writing if, to your knowledge, you are related to a Member, or Officer, of Staffordshire County Council. There is an opportunity to do this on your application form.

We will not appoint you if you canvass any Members/Officers of the County or of any committee of the Council, directly or indirectly – this means asking for help to get a job using their position in the council.

Proof of Qualification

You will have to provide proof of relevant qualifications during the selection process.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

We must take copies of evidence that you are able to legally work within the UK; the following list details the acceptable documents/ combinations of documents which we must see and copy:

Single documents (that we only need to see/copy once) -

- A United Kingdom Passport
- A Passport/National Identity Card from a country in the EEA Agreement stating that the holder is a national of that country
- A United Kingdom residence permit, registration certificate or document certifying or indicating permanent residence issued by the Home Office/ UK Border Agency to an EEA national.
- A permanent residence card issued by the Home Office, UK Border Agency to the family member of a national of an EEA country or Switzerland.
- A Biometric Immigration Document (ID Card) issued by the UK Border Agency to the holder which indicates that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.



- A Passport or other travel document stating the holder is 'exempt from immigration control', is allowed to stay indefinitely/has right of abode in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.

Combinations of documents (that we only need to see/copy once) –

- An official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer **in combination with one of the following documents:**
- An immigration status document issued by Home Office/ Border Agency to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named has no time limit on their stay in the UK
- A full birth OR adoption certificate issued in the United Kingdom/ the Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Ireland
- A certificate of registration or naturalisation as British citizen
- A letter from the Home Office/ Border Agency confirming the individual can undertake the specific work in the UK

Documents that we need to see/copy every 12 months –

- A Passport or other travel document showing the individual can enter the UK and is allowed to do the type of work in question, provided it doesn't require a work permit
- An ID Card issued by the UK Border Agency to the holder which indicates that the person named in it is allowed to stay in the United Kingdom, and is allowed to do the work in question.
- A work permit or other approval to take employment issued by the Home Office or the UK Border Agency **IN COMBINATION WITH** a passport or another travel document/letter endorsed to show the holder can stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.
- A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office or the Border Agency to or for a family member of a national of a EEA/ Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old **IN COMBINATION WITH** evidence of verification by the UK Border Agency Employer Checking Service
- A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office or the Border Agency to or for a family member of a national of a EEA/ Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment, which is less than 6 months old
- An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office or UK Border Agency stating that the holder is permitted to take employment **IN COMBINATION WITH** evidence of verification by the UK Border Agency Employer Checking Service
- An Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office/Border Agency to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it can stay in the United Kingdom, and is allowed to do the type of work in question **IN COMBINATION WITH** A document issued by a previous employer or Government agency which contains the National Insurance number of the holder.
- A letter issued by the Home Office or the UK Border Agency to the holder or the employer or prospective employer, which indicates that the person named in it can stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question **IN COMBINATION WITH** a document issued by a previous employer/Government agency which contains the NI number and name of the holder.

Any document/s you provide must be an original and must be provided when requested during the recruitment process.



The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act was introduced to make sure that you are not discriminated against when applying for jobs, if you have been convicted of a criminal offence and you have not re-offended for a period of time since the date of your conviction.

The Act allows certain types of convictions to be treated as "spent" after a certain (variable) period of time. You are no longer legally required to disclose to us convictions that have become "spent", unless the post you are applying for is exempted. In the case of more serious crimes, such as where the sentence is more than 5 years imprisonment, the conviction can never become "spent" and must always be taken into account.

Exceptions Orders exist to protect vulnerable client groups such as children, young people, and the elderly, sick or disabled. In such cases, we are legally entitled to ask you for details of all convictions, even if they are "spent" or "unspent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. All details of convictions will be disclosed by the Criminal Records Bureau for the preferred candidate.

Cautions, reprimands and final warnings are not criminal convictions and are not covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. They become "spent" immediately and we may only consider them when appointing to exempted posts.

All applicants who are offered employment to a posts subject to a criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed will have to provide details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions.

Having an "unspent" conviction will not necessarily bar you from employment. This will depend on the circumstances and background to your offence(s).

For all other criminal convictions you will only need to disclose any convictions that are not 'spent'. A conviction is regarded as spent if you have served a 'rehabilitation period'. These periods vary according to the sentence received as follows: -

Sentence	Rehabilitation Periods (spent after)	
	Age 18 or over when convicted	Under 18 when convicted
Prison and Young Offender Institution - sentence of 6 months or less	7 years	3 years
Prison and Young Offender Institution - sentence of more than 6 months - 2 years	10 years	5 years
Fines, compensation order, probation (for people convicted on or after 3 Feb 1995), community service, combination order, action plan, curfew order, drug treatment, reparation order	5 years	2 years
Borstal (abolished 1983)	7 years	7 years
Detention centres (abolished 1988)	3 years	3 years
Absolute discharge	6 months	6 months



Sentences for which the rehabilitation period varies:

Probation order (for people convicted prior to 3 Feb 1995), conditional discharge, bind over, supervision order, care order	Until the order expires (minimum period of 1 year)
Attendance centre orders	Length of the order plus 1 year
Hospital order	2 years after the order expires (with a Minimum of 5 years from the date of conviction)
Suspended sentences are treated the same as for the full sentence	
Consecutive and Concurrent sentences An offender may be sentenced at one time for several offences. If the court decides that imprisonment is the right penalty for more than one offence, it can order this to run concurrently or consecutively. If a person is sentenced to two terms of imprisonment of six months each, to run concurrently, the person will be subject to a rehabilitation period of 7 years. If they were ordered to run consecutively, they would be subject to a rehabilitation period of ten years.	
Extension of Rehabilitation periods Rehabilitation periods may be extended if a person receives further convictions while an original rehabilitation period is still running. If the second conviction is for a summary offence, i.e. an offence that can be tried only in a magistrates' court, then the first rehabilitation period is not affected and both rehabilitation periods will run their separate course. If however, the second conviction is more serious and could be tried in crown court, then neither conviction will become spent until the longer rehabilitation period has expired. Where the original sentence resulted in a disqualification, prohibition or other penalty, the rehabilitation period will not be affected if the person is convicted of a further offence.	

Safer Recruitment Checks

Staffordshire County Council provides services to some of the most vulnerable in the county. We are required to ensure that the confidentiality and safety of our service users is protected and we therefore undertake the most stringent vetting of all our staff. This includes, where appropriate, Criminal Records Checks and thorough referencing, scrutiny of previous employment history and checks against our client and employee records. A trace against these does not mean that applicants are unsuitable for employment. It does, however, allow us to explore and address any potential conflicts of interest and also assesses suitability for employment. Signing your application form indicates your consent for such checks to be undertaken.

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