

Guidance Notes for Candidates

Thank you for your interest in working with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. Please read the following guidance notes to assist you with completing your application form.

The information you provide in the application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be shortlisted for interview. It is therefore most important that you complete **ALL** sections of the application form as clearly and fully as possible. Write 'none' or 'not applicable' where you have no information to provide.

Before completing your application form, please read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully. These two documents outline the key duties and responsibilities of the post and the skills, competencies, and qualifications required of the post holder. You will need to demonstrate that you meet the requirements of the Person Specification (or at least have the potential to do so), in order to be considered for shortlist and interview. It is important that where you can, you use examples in your application to show clearly how you meet the essential and desirable criteria on the Person Specification.

Curriculum Vitae (CVs) will not be considered, as part of the application process.

In any section of the form, if you feel you need more space, please use extra sheets of paper. If you do so, please put your name on these continuation sheets with the post reference number and section heading.

We operate an interview guarantee scheme for people with a disability who meet the essential criteria in the person specification for the post. If you do have a disability, there are a number of ways in which we can help you if you require it. From giving assistance with completing the application form, making special arrangements if you are invited for interview and making adjustments for you to do the job where reasonable.

If it comes to light at any stage of the recruitment and selection process that an applicant has made false statements on their application form or otherwise withheld relevant information from the interview panel, then the application will be immediately rejected.

Finally, it is not our normal practice to acknowledge receipt of an application. However, if you require confirmation that your application has been received, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. If you are applying online, you will receive an automated acknowledgement. It is not possible to notify all applicants of the outcome of their application. ***If you have not been notified that you have been selected for interview within 4 weeks of the closing date, please assume that your application has not progressed to the next stage of the recruitment process.***

This guidance outline is separated into sections as they appear on the application form.

1. **Vacancy Details** – Please give the post reference number, closing date, title of the job that you are applying for. This information will be found in the job advertisement.
2. **a) Personal Information** – Please provide home, mobile and work telephone numbers, as well as an email address, so that we can contact you. If you cannot be contacted at work, please ensure that you indicate this on the form.

b) Driving – We also ask whether you have a full driving licence and access to a vehicle for work purposes. This is important if the job you are applying for requires you to drive. If you have penalty points this does not automatically mean you are not suitable for the job you have applied for.

3. Education, Qualifications, Learning and Development –

Please use this section to show us that you have the necessary qualifications to do the job. Give full details of relevant educational, technical and professional qualifications with subject area and attainment level(s) or grades. If you have an overseas qualification, please state the UK equivalent if you know it.

You may find that the post you are applying for requires you to be a member of an organisation or professional body. If this is the case, please complete this section and tell us your current membership status. If you have professional qualifications, which are not listed on the Person Specification, you can use this section to include them if you feel they are relevant.

Please also tell us about any short courses (in-house or external), apprenticeships, evening classes etc that you have attended. You may have attended a workshop with an employer in the past that may still be relevant.

You should not attach copies of your qualifications to your application form. However you will be asked to produce evidence of your qualifications at the interview stage.

4. Employment/Work Experience -

Give details of your current/last job including your place of work, a brief description of the role, salary, start date, (end date if applicable), notice required and your reason for leaving. Also list your previous employers in date order, starting with the most recent. Include your job title, brief duties, salary, notice period and reason for leaving. Include any voluntary work, particularly if you have not been in paid work before. Where possible, please provide “From” and “To” dates. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process. If you have worked abroad, make sure you give the name of your overseas employer.

Where there are gaps in employment please ensure you explain the reason(s) in the space provided.

If you are currently employed by a local authority then please ensure exact dates of employment are stated. This will assist in calculating your continuous local government service if you are appointed to the post that you are applying for.

5. References –

Please provide details of two referees who can provide information about you which is relevant to your application. One of these references must be your current or most recent employer. Please state in what capacity you know your referees and if they could be contacted prior to interview.

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If you are a school leaver, one of your references should be from the Head Teacher/Principal/Head of Year of your school/college. The other reference may be a character reference.

All jobs are offered subject to the Council receiving references that are satisfactory to ourselves, and if you are called for interview, we may approach your referees unless you have indicated that you do not wish for them to be contacted at this stage.

6. Supporting Information –

This section is your opportunity to expand on your competencies, skills, experience, learning and development to demonstrate to us why you are a suitable candidate. In other words this is your opportunity to promote yourself to the Council. When describing competencies, experience, learning and development it is helpful if you are able to include examples.

Please check the Job Advertisement, Job Description, and Person Specification to clarify the skills and competency areas you must provide evidence of. Your evidence may also be drawn from activities outside the workplace.

In order to be shortlisted, you need to demonstrate to us that you meet at least all of the essential criteria in the Person Specification. If too many applicants meet all the essential criteria, the shortlist will be reduced by selection of those who meet some, or all of the desirable criteria.

Do not replace this section or the application form in general with a CV, as this will not be considered.

If you are an internal candidate, you still need to meet the criteria. Do not assume that you will be short listed because recruiting managers know your skills and experience.

7. Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 -

Under Section 8 of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996, employers must ensure that any prospective employee is legally entitled to live and work in the UK. If you are invited for interview you will be required to produce an official document confirming that you are entitled to live and work in the UK, for example passport, full birth certificate and official document confirming your name and national insurance number; or a passport/travel document/letter from the Home Office.

If you do not have a National Insurance Number, please leave this section blank.

8. Declaration of Interests –

If you are related to a Councillor or an employee of the Borough Council we ask you tell us so that we can make sure all applications are treated fairly. Canvassing any Councillor or employee of the Borough Council, for example seeking to gain an unfair advantage through personal contacts) will disqualify your application.

9. Declaration -

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If you are invited for an interview, you will need to sign your application form as an official declaration that the information you have supplied is correct. By signing the form you are also consenting to the Borough Council in obtaining information from relevant third parties, processing the personal information supplied in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. For the purposes of the recruitment and selection process, if you are appointed, the details you have supplied (including the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form) will form part of your employee record.

If you are invited for an interview and have applied on online via our website, you will be required to sign your Application Form at the interview stage.

Completed Application Forms and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms must be received by Human Resources at the address on the bottom of the application form by 5pm on the stated closing date. Late applications after 5pm will NOT be accepted.

Should it come to light at any stage of the recruitment and selection process that an applicant has made false statements on their application form or otherwise withheld relevant information from the interview panel, then the application will be immediately rejected.

10. Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form –

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council asks for the information on disability, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion or belief in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Council's equal opportunity and recruitment policies.

The information provided within this section of the form is retained within Human Resources used for workforce monitoring purposes and is not disclosed to anybody else involved in the recruitment and selection process.

11. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions Declaration Form (Forms 11A/11B)/Disclosure & Barring Service Check -

If you are selected for interview you will be sent and required to complete a Disclosure of Criminal Convictions Declaration Form. On the back of the form there is guidance about which previous criminal convictions you have to disclose. You must bring this form with you to the interview. The form will be treated as confidential and will be considered only in relation to the job for which you are being interviewed.

The Council is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable people. Therefore, if the post for which you are applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, we will require you to apply for a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service, which details spent and unspent convictions. This will be highlighted in the Job Advertisement, Job Description and Person Specification.

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