Job Application Guide



WOKING
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

This guide has been developed to provide a brief overview of:

i) What Woking Borough Council has to offer prospective applicants and

ii) Our recruitment process, including hints and tips to maximise your chances of being shortlisted for interview.

You are advised to read all of the information carefully before starting to complete the application form - this will ensure that you have the best possible chance of success.

If you cannot find the answer to a question in this guide or if you would like to discuss a particular aspect of employment with us, you can contact a member of our Human Resources team by calling **01483 743858** or emailing **hr@woking.gov.uk**

Why work for us?

- Woking Borough Council is a forward-thinking organisation that supports its employees and provides excellent working conditions.
- A silver accredited Investor in People, the Council prioritises learning and development of its employees and recognises that it can only achieve its business objectives through a highly trained workforce.
- The Council values diversity and is keen to reflect the community in our workforce. We welcome applications from all members of the public.
- The Council has been accredited a Disability Confident Employer. Implementation of this scheme involves flexibility in recruitment practices and making reasonable adjustments as required when assessing candidates to ensure that those with a disability have the best possible chance of demonstrating their suitability for the job. Primarily, this means that any applicant that identifies that they have a disability and meets all the minimum criteria for a position (the essential criteria set out in the person specification), will be granted an interview. For more information, please email **hr@woking.gov.uk**



The Employment Package: Pay and Benefits

Pay Scheme

The Council aims to have a competitive and fair pay and benefits scheme that serves to:

- Attract, retain and motivate its people
- Reward performance
- Encourage and reward the right behaviours
- Ensure equality and transparency
- Pay at least equivalent to the Living Wage.

Please find more information in the Council's Pay, Benefits and Performance Management Scheme document which is attached to each job advertisement. This also outlines the Council's Performance and Development Review (PDR) process.

Flexible Benefits

Woking Borough Council aims to offer a flexible approach to the employment package; therefore all employees receive a flexible benefit allowance. Each employee decides whether they would like to receive their allowance as either a cash payment or use it to purchase an annual public sector car park season ticket for a town centre car park. Where the allowance exceeds the cost of the season ticket, a percentage of the remaining cash is paid.

Vehicle Allowance

The Council recognises that some roles require essential items in order for them to be carried out effectively and efficiently. These items may include a vehicle where no other methods of transport are available or practical. Therefore the Council will provide an additional job related vehicle allowance to roles where it has been agreed that a vehicle is required and the flexible benefit fund is not adequate to secure the vehicle. All vehicles must comply with Council environmental and safety standards. More information will be provided at the offer stage where relevant.

Learning and Development

As a silver accredited Investor in People employer, the Council offers an extensive range of learning and development opportunities covering a wide variety of areas. Employees are encouraged to work with their manager to plan how these opportunities can be best used to meet their needs upon joining, and throughout their employment with, the Council. Regular one-to-one meetings take place between the employee and manager and are an important way of discussing learning and development requirements.

Hours of Work

The Council understands that in addition to a commitment to the work of the Council, employees have additional responsibilities and commitments outside of work. It aims to operate flexible working arrangements wherever possible which include a generous flexi-time scheme, job share opportunities and working from home - all of which are subject to meeting the needs of the service. Exact arrangements would need to be agreed with the line manager.

Annual Leave Entitlement

The leave year is based on the anniversary date of joining Woking Borough Council. For employees new to local government, the initial annual paid leave entitlement is 23 working days, plus public holidays. This increases to 28 working days after five years continuous service within local government. After 10 years service with Woking Borough Council, you will receive 29 working days and after 20 years service with Woking Borough Council this will increase to 30 working days.

Part-time employees receive an appropriate proportion of annual paid leave according to the contracted hours worked - the figures above are based on a 37 hour, five day working week.

The Employment Package: Pay and Benefits

Pension

Council employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, a generous scheme based on career-average earnings. For more information and the current contribution rates, please visit **www.surreypensionfund.org**. The Council currently makes a monthly employers' pension contribution of 14.9%.

Other Benefits

Examples of other benefits include:*

- Free swimming at Pool in the Park
- Corporate Key Card membership
- Local discounts on shops and services
- Access to the Employees Benefits Lifestyle portal (for discounts on high street vouchers and days out)
- Childcare vouchers
- Annual health checks
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Public transport season ticket loans
- Relocation Assistance (for more information, email **hr@woking.gov.uk**)

*Not an exhaustive list. Additional information is available in the Council's Employee Handbook.



Applying for this Job

In addition to this guide, we also suggest you refer to the following list of documents to assist in the completion of your application form. Links to these documents can be found with the online advertisement.

- A copy of the Job Profile
- The Council's Behavioural Framework
- The Council's Pay, Benefits and Performance Management Scheme
- Linked Grade Descriptor (only where applicable)

Understanding the Job Profile

Comprised of the job description, a person specification and a role map, the Job Profile is a key tool used by managers to determine whether an applicant meets the requirements for the role.

The **job description** explains the key responsibilities of the position and gives details of the tasks that the successful candidate will be expected to perform. The **person specification** sets out the skills, qualities and attributes that we are looking for in the successful candidate. We believe that the items on the list are either essential or desirable for the person to be able to do the job well. The **role map** indicates the expected behaviours for each role. This document needs to be used with the Behavioural Framework document to see examples of behaviours expected at each level.

PLEASE NOTE:

It is extremely important that you consider how you fit the person specification so that you demonstrate your strengths on the application form.

Shortlisting for Interview

Your application will be assessed following the closing date. Each applicant will be contacted via email within three weeks of the closing date. The email will notify each candidate of whether their application has been taken to the interview stage.



Hints and Tips: Maximise your chances of application success

Make sure that you provide all of the necessary information

- Remember that the interview panel will short-list applicants on the basis of information contained in the application alone, so make sure that you include detailed examples of how you meet the essential or desirable criteria listed in the job profile.

Read the documentation

- Carefully read the advert, job description, person specification and behavioural framework.
- A lot of information about the locality, the Council and its services is available on the Council website **www.woking.gov.uk**
- You should ensure that you have done some background reading and have a good understanding of the role.

Tell us what motivates you

Before completing the form, think about the following questions:

- What is it about the advert that attracted you?
- Why are you interested in the job?
- Is it a good career move - sidewise to broaden experience, or promotion?
- Are you ready for more responsibility - can you support this?
- Can you demonstrate that you can do the job?



Take your time to complete the online application form

Allow plenty of time to complete the form online, you can save your form at any point and return to it. Perhaps consider asking someone else to read it through before you submit it, to check that everything is clear and concise.

List your employment history

- Make sure you explain the main features of each job that you have had, particularly your present or latest job.
- Put your jobs in date order with the most recent and current employment first, followed by past employments, so your oldest employment period will be last.
- Does your job title adequately describe your role? If not, try to give us as much information as possible.
- Please do not use abbreviations.
- Express salaries as annual or hourly figures rather than grades.
- Any gaps in employment should be briefly explained i.e. career break, world travel. There is a box where you will be prompted to do this.

Check (and re-check) that all dates and details are correct

Inaccuracies within your application form may cause delays to employment if you are offered the role.

Hints and Tips: Maximise your chances of application success

Give detail when writing about your experience

Emphasise your current and past responsibilities. Explaining your present and previous jobs to someone else may help you to identify 'hidden' skills that you take for granted.

- What evidence have you got that you have the necessary skills, knowledge, qualification and experience for the job you are applying for? Tailor your application to the job you are applying for - don't submit the same one for a series of jobs.
- Remember to include all relevant experience that will assist in the consideration of your application - this includes experience gained at home or through voluntary, college, community and leisure activities.
- Evidence of qualifications will be requested, where applicable. If, for whatever reason, you have the qualifications but not the evidence please explain this clearly.

Provide additional information (Personal Statement)

This is your chance to show us how you meet our person specification and why you consider yourself suitable for this post. This should be a minimum of 200 words for most jobs.

- Look again at the person specification. Let us know what aspects you meet and how you meet them - give examples. Set out this information clearly and concisely. Use an additional sheet if you need more space.
- Use the headings from the person specification and give examples underneath - this will enable the short-listing panel to score your application quickly and easily and will show that you have read through all of the documentation.



Pre-employment Checks (Conditions of Offer of Employment)

References

References will be required - these are usually taken up upon offer of employment and with your permission. Any offer of employment will be made subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory references.

Medical assessment

All new appointees are required to answer five short medical screening questions. If any question is answered with a 'yes', an additional medical questionnaire will be issued by the Council's independent Occupational Health provider. The process may then require a telephone consultation with Occupational Health to establish whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to accommodate any existing conditions.

Confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK

You may be aware that under the provisions of Section 15 to 25 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, employers must ensure that prospective employees are eligible to work in the UK. Consequently, as a condition of employment, you are asked to provide documentary evidence that you are eligible to work in the UK. This must be provided **before** you start work.

UK Border Agency - Points Based System for migrant workers

Woking Borough Council is not currently licensed as a sponsor and cannot employ migrant workers outside the EEA and Switzerland under the 'Points Based System' rules issued by the UK Border Agency (Home Office).

Politically Restricted Posts

Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, a number of posts are politically restricted and will prevent an employee from having any politically active role either in or outside the workplace. They will not be able to hold or stand for elected office, and will be prevented from:

- Participating in political activities, publicly expressing support for a political party or undertaking other activities such as canvassing on behalf of a person who seeks to be a candidate; and
- Speaking to the public at large or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression that you are advocating support for a political party.

If this post is politically restricted this will be outlined in the advert and person specification.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure requirements

We take a robust approach to thoroughly checking anyone who has applied to work with children and / or vulnerable adults.

Where stated, some jobs involve contact with **children and / or vulnerable adults**. Therefore, any offer of employment is subject to receipt of a Disclosure Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) that is considered satisfactory to the Council.

A Disclosure Certificate provides Woking Borough Council with criminal record information in order to be able to make an informed recruitment decision.

We encourage all applicants who require DBS Disclosure Certificates, to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the process. If you are short-listed for interview and have advised us of a criminal record, we request that any supporting information you wish to provide is sent under separate, confidential cover to: Human Resources, Woking Borough Council, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6YL. We guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. At interview, or in a separate discussion, a measured and open discussion will take place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Pre-employment Checks (Conditions of Offer of Employment)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure requirements

The successful applicant will be required to obtain a satisfactory **DBS Disclosure Certificate**. As part of this process, we will need to confirm your identity and may require evidence of certain qualifications. **The cost of the application will be met by the Council.**

If you are made a conditional job offer, you will be required to complete a form which is countersigned by Woking Borough Council. This is then sent to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It may take up to four weeks to receive the Disclosure Certificate and you may not be able to start work until this has been received and, if necessary, discussed with you.

You will receive the Disclosure Certificate at your home address - you will need to present this original to a member of the **Human Resources (HR) team** upon receipt.

Following an assessment of the information received on the Disclosure Certificate, Woking Borough Council will contact you to either:

- Offer you the post or
- Invite you in for further discussion or
- Withdraw the offer of employment, explaining our reasons for doing so.

The Council is committed to the 'Disclosure and Barring Services Code of Practice', a copy of which is available on request or on the Home Office website **www.homeoffice.gov.uk**

Ex-offender information

Please note that a criminal record is not a bar to employment. This depends on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

Your attention is drawn to the Council's policies on the 'Recruitment of Ex-offenders' and the 'Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information'. These policies are available on request.

Qualification checks

All professional qualifications which are essential criteria on the person specification will be checked at the job offer stage. Only original certificates are acceptable. If you do not have the original certificates, please obtain a true and certified copy from the awarding body.

If you have obtained your qualifications overseas the Council will contact the awarding body, or seek advice from the relevant country's UK embassy, consulate or high commission to check that the qualification exists and that it is equivalent to the stated UK qualification. Details of the awarding bodies must be provided in this case.

In both cases copies of these certificates or other proof will be kept on your employee file.

What to do next...

Now that you have read through the application guide and thought carefully about the job that you are applying for, you are ready to take the next step and complete the online application form.

Application Submission Checklist

Have you:

- Read through the job description, person specification and role map and feel confident that you can do the job?
- Completed some background reading to understand more about the position?
- Listed your current and previous positions in date order with the most recent first?
- Explained any gaps in your career history?
- Given examples of how you meet the person specification in the additional information section?
- Used the application form to explain your strengths?
- Checked your application form for spelling and grammar mistakes?
- Checked both the closing date and the interview date?

When you have done all that you need to, please submit your application form, before the specified closing date and then leave the rest to us!

Thank you for your interest in Woking Borough Council and working for us. We look forward to receiving your application.

