



Antrim and
Newtownabbey
BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPLICANT GUIDANCE NOTES

GUIDANCE NOTES

Please read carefully

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants. The information you supply on your application form will be treated in the strictest confidence and solely for assessing your suitability for the post. Please read the following instructions prior to completing your application form as this will facilitate you in correctly and accurately completing your application.

An applicant found to have knowingly given false information, or to have wilfully suppressed any material fact will be liable to disqualification, or if appointed, to dismissal. Canvassing will disqualify.

Application Form

Read the job description and person specification carefully. Applications will be shortlisted against the essential and, if necessary, desirable criteria as stated in the person specification. As the applicant, it is your responsibility to fully complete the essential and desirable criteria sections of the application form.

If you do not, the shortlisting panel may not have sufficient information to shortlist you for the next stage of the selection process.

Applications will only be accepted on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's online application portal so that all applicants are given the same opportunity to provide their information.

You must complete the form fully and accurately. Incomplete application forms will not be considered.

CVs, letters or any other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms and will not be submitted to the shortlisting panel. Only the information presented within the application form will be considered by the shortlisting panel.

Personal Information Section

Please complete in full the requested personal information.

Employment History Section

Please give details of your present or most recent employer including a summary of your duties and responsibilities. Please also provide details of all previous employment, if applicable.

References Section

The Council will only contact references when a conditional offer has been made.

The Council will require a reference from your current or most recent employer. Only in circumstances where the applicant has not been in employment for a considerable period of time or not at all, will other referees be considered, and the Council will consider their appropriateness.

Relatives or Elected Members of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should not be named as referees. Your referees will be asked to complete a report and return this to us within a specified time which will be noted on our correspondence to them. It is essential that applicants obtain their referees' permission to be contacted. Failure to secure references which are satisfactory to the Council, may result in an offer not being made.

Shortlisting Criteria Section

Please note that the panel can only make a decision to invite you to the next stage of the selection process based on the information you provide in relation to the essential criteria, and if required the desirable criteria.

The essential criteria are the factors that are considered necessary by the Council for a post holder to have in order to be able to satisfactorily undertake the role. The applicant must meet all essential criteria to progress to the next stage of the recruitment process.

The desirable criteria describes the extra factors, which it is preferable that an applicant holds in order to be able to undertake the role. All noted desirable criteria, if included in the person specification, may be used to shortlist.

Carefully read the question associated with each criterion. You must clearly demonstrate how you meet the criteria outlined in the relevant section of the application form.

Experience

Please **state the start and end dates of your relevant experience (month and year)** and check the accuracy of these dates before submitting your application. It is necessary to **state your exact dates of employment (month and year)** because this is calculated to the month for shortlisting purposes. The shortlisting panel will only consider the information you have provided in each section in order to determine whether or not you meet the criteria. They will not refer to your employment history dates in other parts of the form.

For example, if a minimum of two years' experience is required you must show on your application how you meet this requirement by clearly outlining your employment history in relation to dates of employment, e.g. 01/2018 - 04/2022 or January 2018 to April 2022.

If you complete your application without identifying the dates of your employment history or use only the year, the shortlisting panel will not be able to shortlist your application.

You must demonstrate that you have the required length of experience at the closing date for receipt of applications as the shortlisting panel are only able to consider experience up to this date.

You must complete the relevant information relating to your experience in the relevant section provided. If you submit information in another section of the application, for example if you enter "see above" etc., it will not be considered by the shortlisting panel.

You will be required to clearly demonstrate, by giving personal and specific details on your application, how you meet the experience as detailed in the person specification in the relevant

section. If you do not supply sufficient information in your application form to clearly demonstrate that you meet the criteria the shortlisting panel will not be able to shortlist your application.

Qualifications

If you are asked if you have specific qualifications you must provide the following information for each qualification that you possess: i.e. **Year, Level:** e.g. GCSE, RSA/OCR Stage 2, Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, etc. **Subject:** title of subject studies, e.g. English, Maths, Geography etc. **Mark/Grade:** e.g. A, B, C, Pass, Merit, Distinction, 2:1, First etc. Also for example, if GCSE English Language Grade A to C or equivalent is required and you only record English the panel will not be able to consider your application further.

If the information relating to your qualification is incomplete, for example, you do not state the mark/grade for your degree, the shortlisting panel will not be able to consider your application further.

You must possess any relevant qualifications required in the job specification, at the closing date for receipt of application. If you are currently studying for or waiting for exam results, the panel cannot consider these.

If you are applying for a post on the basis of a qualification which you consider to be a relevant equivalent qualification, you must provide specific evidence to demonstrate its equivalency in comparison to the qualification that was specifically detailed in the job specification. If requested you must submit clear evidence in respect of the examining body which has verified its equivalency.

You will be asked for proof of qualifications that are relevant to this post and/or your driving licence and any offer of employment with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be conditional on satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

If professional qualifications are required please include full details of the professional qualification you hold, including the date of the award.

If membership of a professional body is required please include the name of the body or organisation, the type of membership you hold (e.g. graduate, associate, fellow, etc.) and the date when this grade of membership was obtained. If the membership has lapsed please state this.

Declaration Section

It is up to the applicant to ensure that the information that you give is accurate.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to appointing the best person for the job. Applicants will not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, dependants, marital, civil partnership or family status, pregnancy and maternity leave, race, religious belief, political opinion and sexual orientation.

This information will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be used in any part of the selection process. The information collected will be used to measure the effectiveness of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and will assist us in developing and reviewing positive/affirmative action measures and/or policies. The monitoring system will be concerned only with statistical analyses and will not identify individuals.

Closing Date

Applications received after the stated closing date and time will not be considered.

After Shortlisting

When the recruitment panel have completed the shortlisting process, all applicants will be notified in writing if they have been successful. All successful applicants will be invited to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Dates for the next stage of the recruitment process are fixed and alternative arrangements will not always be able to be made for applicants unless you have extenuating circumstances.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments

Any request(s) for reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process/arrangements should be submitted to the Human Resources Department at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure due consideration can be given to such request(s).

Competency Based Interview

The questions asked in a competency-based interview are designed to seek evidence that you have the specific competencies or skills required. Applicants are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific circumstances.

Applicants should use specific situations from their experience as examples when answering these questions. Applicants should also explain why they made certain decisions, how these were implemented and the outcomes.

A helpful technique to prepare yourself for a competency-based interview is known as the STAR technique:

Situation: set the scene and describe the situation or problem you encountered.

Task: outline the task that was required to resolve the issue or problem.

Action: describe what you did. How and when you did it, the rationale for the choices you made and the key things that you did to overcome the issue or problem.

Result: what the outcome was and the difference it made.

In each example you need to show clearly what your personal contribution was. Avoid using 'we' and describe what you did.

Appointment

If you are recommended for appointment this will be subject to satisfactory completion of the following pre-employment checks:

1. Two satisfactory references **
2. Original proof of qualifications and/or membership of any relevant professional bodies, which were part of the person specification
3. Satisfactory pre-employment medical *
4. Evidence of being legally permitted to work in the United Kingdom
5. Disclosure of criminal convictions ***
6. Satisfactory AccessNI check
7. Proof of Identity

Find out more about the different AccessNI checks, including what information is disclosed and what roles require AccessNI checks at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks/>

* Applicants who fail to attend a scheduled medical appointment as part of the pre-employment checks will be required to reimburse the Council for the entire cost of any subsequent pre-employment medical appointments before proceeding to offer.

** Sickness absence information which is required as part of your reference check will be assessed in accordance with the Council's Policy for Managing Attendance. Maternity, industrial injury or disability related absences will not be included when assessing your sickness absence.

*** Complete a disclosure of criminal convictions form, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978. With the exemption of regulated or previously regulated posts and roles covered by Exception Order (for which there are separate forms), all applicants who are recommended for appointment must provide details in respect of any criminal convictions which are not regarded as 'spent' convictions. Any disclosed convictions will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered relevant to the post.