



## GUIDANCE NOTES

Please read these Guidance Notes carefully before completing the application form. The application form is the first step in the recruitment process, which may lead to an interview and the possible offer of a job. It is therefore important that you complete the application form *attached to the particular vacancy to ensure you are completing the correct one, and that you complete it* as fully as you can. If applying for a school vacancy please contact the school for an application form and pack, as they are specific. We do not accept CV's and therefore the information that you supply on the application form is the only information that we consider when deciding whether you should be shortlisted.

[If you are responding via e-mail, please return your completed application form to the e-mail address that appears on the advert for the job you are applying for.](#)

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are shortlisted for interview, you will be asked to sign the declaration on your application form and declaration of convictions at the interview.

### ***What happens next?***

- A panel of at least two people will select a shortlist, based on the information provided on your application form.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview and advised of any special arrangements, tests or presentations for the interview.
- If you have not heard from us by the interview date, please assume you have been unsuccessful. If you would like feedback on why your application was unsuccessful please contact us.

It is the policy of Reading Borough Council to request references for all shortlisted candidates before the interview, unless requested otherwise. One of your referees **MUST** be your current or most recent employer.

No offer of employment will be made without the receipt of two satisfactory references and medical clearance.

### **Right of Appeal**

A copy of our Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy is contained on our website. If you feel you have been discriminated against for any of the reasons set out in this document, please let us have written details of your complaint within 10 working days. This should be addressed to:

**Head of Human Resources, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading. RG1 7AE**

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

### (a) General Information

- (1) Please read the job description, person specification, advertisement and any other papers carefully, before filling in the form, and use this information to make your application relevant to the post.
- (2) Please use **black ink** or type your application form - this helps when the applications are photocopied.
- (3) **Do not send a CV with your application** - we believe that asking all applicants to complete an application form ensures fairness and consistency in our recruitment process.
- (4) Do not submit the same application form for more than one job. Tailor each application to fulfil the requirements for a particular job. Please endeavour to keep your application form neat and tidy - the application form provides our first impression of you!
- (5) The selection criteria used for shortlisting are the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience required to do a specific job. No assumptions will be made about these criteria. It is therefore vital that you tell us how you meet the selection criteria.
- (6) If you wish to include additional sheets to support your application, please do so, ensuring that they are fixed securely to the application form. Please make sure you mark each sheet clearly with your application form number and the job reference number, but **not** your name, as personal information is kept separate during the shortlisting process.
- (7) Please return the application form by the closing date advertised.
- (8) Candidates with a disability who can show that they meet the minimum requirements of the person specification are guaranteed an interview.

### (a) The Application Form

- (1) **Personal Details** - In accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act, the information you provide on the application form will be used solely for the purpose of the RBC recruitment procedure and will not be used or passed on to any third party for any other reason. We appreciate it is not always convenient to contact you at your workplace, therefore please indicate if this will be acceptable. If you have a personal e-mail address and would like us to contact you by this method please provide your address clearly in the space provided.
- (2) **References** - In order to speed up the process of appointment we will make a request for references before we interview you, unless you specify otherwise.

- (3) **Recruitment Monitoring** - Reading Borough Council operates a policy of equal opportunity and fair treatment for employment and development. To assist in monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, and for this reason only, applicants are asked to give details of their ethnic origin, sex and any disability. The information you provide is used solely for monitoring purposes. It will be treated as confidential and will be detached from your application form on receipt. The information will not be seen by those who decide on the list of applicants to be invited to interview.
- (4) **Asylum & Immigration Act 1996** - Under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, it is a criminal offence to employ a person aged 16 or over who is subject to immigration control unless that person has current and valid permission to be in the UK and that permission does not prevent them from taking a job; or the person comes into a category where employment is allowed.
- (5) **Education, Qualifications & Training** - Please include all your education, qualifications & training, both informal and formal. You may be asked to produce certificates confirming qualification at a later stage.
- (6) **Present/Recent Employment** - Starting with your present employer, please complete this section in date order, beginning with your most recent job and listing all work undertaken, paid and voluntary, since leaving school. Please account for any breaks/gaps in employment history since leaving full time education. Please continue this section on a separate sheet if necessary.
- (7) **Skills, Abilities, Knowledge & Experience** - This section is the most vital part of the form. You may be one of many people applying for a job, so your application needs to stand out by showing your suitability against the person specification. You should provide **examples** of how you meet the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience identified, these can be non-work based if necessary.

Some key words that may be in the person specification are:

Experience: What have you already done - where, when and how long?

Knowledge: What do you know and how do you apply what you have learnt to your present job or the one that you are applying for?

Ability/Skills: What can you do?

Managerial and Supervisory Skills: What responsibility have you had for people or particular areas of work?

Clerical and Administration: Have you got experience of filing, photocopying, office administration?

Numeracy: Can you deal with figures or use a spreadsheet? Are these skills at a basic, intermediate or advanced level?

Literacy: How good are you with words? What experience have you had in writing letters, reports, memos etc.

Information Technology: What experience have you had of computers, word processing, spreadsheets etc?

Interpersonal: How well can you deal with people on a one to one basis, teams or in a group etc? What are your organisational skills and dealing with deadlines like?

Communication: Tell us about your communication skills - presenting, persuading, negotiating, counselling, selling, use of other languages etc.

- (8) **Relationship with Council/Councillors** - Canvassing of Councillors or officers in relation to this appointment will disqualify you.
- (9) **Disclosure of Criminal Convictions** - You will be required to complete a Declaration of Criminal Convictions and you should return this with your application form. The type of form will depend on the post for which you have applied.

The following posts are exempt from Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 2001 and you will be required to provide a list of all convictions, cautions and reprimands and also undertake a Disclosure check:

- Posts, which provide accommodation, care, leisure and recreational facilities, schooling, social services, supervision or training to people aged under 18. This includes teachers, caretakers, youth workers, social workers.
- Posts which provide services to elderly people, those with a mental illness or learning disability, physically disabled people, alcohol mis-users, drug mis-users or the chronically sick
- Health service appointments
- Posts which involve the administration of justice e.g. police officers
- Certain professions which have legal protection e.g. lawyers, doctors, dentists, nurses, chemists and accountants
- Posts where national security may be at risk e.g. in the civil service

A **Disclosure** is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. It can be used by employers to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures are provided by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), an executive agency of the Home Office.

You may be asked to complete or obtain one of the following Disclosures:

**Basic** - this will show all convictions which are not 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 and can be obtained directly from the CRB.

**Standard / Enhanced** - you may be asked to complete an application form for a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure because you will be working with children or vulnerable adults; or will be working in an establishment that is wholly or mainly for

children or vulnerable adults, or will be working in healthcare; or have applied to be a foster carer, adoptive parent or childminder. There are also a number of other specified positions and professions for which a Disclosure can be required.

**Standard Disclosures** contain details of all convictions on record (including 'spent' convictions - i.e. those that happened some time ago and normally no longer need to be revealed as specified in the ROA 1974) plus details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings. For positions involving 'working with children' also giving information contained on a government department lists of people considered unsuitable to work with children.

**Enhanced Disclosures** are for posts involving greater contact with children or vulnerable adults such as a social worker, care assistant. All Enhanced Disclosures involve an extra level of checking with local police force records in addition to checks on the Police National Computer (PNC) and the government department lists.

You will be sent directly the results of your check by the Bureau and this will be copied to the Council.

The disclosure of a criminal record will not debar you from appointment unless the selection panel, having considered carefully the following factors, determine that the conviction renders you unsuitable for appointment. The factors to be taken into account are:

- (a) The responsibilities of the position,
- (b) The vulnerability of children or adults supported,
- (c) The nature of the offence(s),
- (d) The circumstances of the offence(s),
- (e) The number and pattern of offences (if there is more than one),
- (f) How long ago the offence(s) occurred,
- (g) The age of the offender when the offence(s) occurred.

Information received from the Bureau will be kept in strict confidence. Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.

If you already have a Disclosure and would like to use it for a second position please notify the Recruiting Manager. When making this decision they will take into account the length of time that has elapsed since the Disclosure was issued; the level of Disclosure; the nature of the position for which the Disclosure was issued; and the nature of the position for which you are now applying.

A copy of the Criminal Record Bureau's Code of Practice is available from the HR team.