

Guidance notes for applicants on submitting an application

Our ambition

We're determined to make Islington fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We also have an ambitious goal – to be the best council in the country – with every employee clear about the part they play and inspired, focused and supported to give their very best.

We want to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired and empowered to help us achieve our goals and provide the best services possible to our residents.

Our values and behaviours

'Be Islington' is about setting a clear challenge about what it means to be an Islington employee and sets the standard for every new recruit.

We ask our employees to 'Be Islington' – playing their part in working together for a fairer borough and to always be collaborative, be ambitious, be resourceful, and be empowering ('CARE').

Our commitment to challenging inequality

We are committed to tackling inequality, racism and injustice and creating a fairer borough for all. In order to do this, we need to set the example by being a fair employer and creating a workplace environment, which is free from discrimination, racism and inequality. Our approach needs to be proactive, consistently learning to create a fairer workplace and foster a culture, which empowers all staff to challenge inequality.

Fairness is at the heart of what we do. We want to celebrate and embrace our differences by:

- Ensuring our workforce is representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents
- Creating equitable working environments and diverse teams
- Understanding our residents in order to design and deliver services that help tackle inequality and improve life chances for our residents
- Getting to know people and their differences
- Interpreting issues and concerns from a cultural perspective and address situations or problems from the points-of-view of multiple cultures
- Supporting people with long-term health conditions and/or disabilities
- Recognising the value of flexible working to support staff where possible

General Information

The following information will help you complete your application form as effectively as possible. If you require assistance in completing the form, or need the form in an alternative format please contact a member of the Resourcing Team at recruitment@islington.gov.uk

Applicants are appointed based on their experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the role. The Council has a duty to ensure the integrity of the selection process and that the correct procedures have been followed. All those involved in recruitment and selection receive appropriate training. We also ensure wherever possible that panels are of a diverse make-up (for example gender, ethnicity and age, and where appropriate consider a range of perspectives with a representative service user).

Applying these principles in practice means that:

- All appointments are above suspicion of patronage
- Selection is fair, transparent and objective.
- Those appointed have the necessary experience, knowledge, skills and abilities

Islington Council is a rewarding place to work, we therefore receive thousands of job applications each year. Your application form is the first impression you'll make with us. So make it count. It's your best chance of securing that all-important interview.

To give you the best chance of standing out, this guide will help you to submit a strong application.

It covers (click the link to skip to a specified section):

- [7 Steps to applying for a job at Islington Council](#)
- [Your supporting statement](#)
- [References](#)
- [Disability Confident employer](#)
- [Declaring a criminal conviction](#)
- [Submitting your application](#)
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7 steps to applying for a job at Islington

1. Read the job advert carefully. It will give you information to help your application, as well as the salary, hours and location. Look at any attached documents too – especially the job description and person specification which tell you the detail of the job, plus the skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications you need.
2. If you are an internal applicant and the position has been advertised as 'Open to Internal applicants only', please be aware that priority will be given to those currently at risk of redundancy within the council. Current employees in the redeployment pool must meet the essential criteria for shortlisting to be prioritised. This may mean that if you are an internal staff member who is not at risk of redundancy there may be other staff members who will take priority over your application.
3. Click 'apply', which will take you to the application form.

4. Complete the personal details section. These will be saved, so you only need to enter them once.
5. Complete the equality and diversity (Equal Opportunities) section:
 - This information will be saved and can be re-used for future applications.
 - We use this information to make sure adverts and jobs appeal to a wide range of people. It's never seen by managers that shortlist and interview, only our HR team.
6. Complete the rest of the application form. Some of it will change for each job, some things like your previous jobs, qualifications or courses will stay the same.
7. Do a final check, then you're ready to submit your application.

Your supporting statement

Your supporting statement is probably the most important section on the form. It massively affects the decision on whether or not to invite you for an interview. A good supporting statement clearly and concisely explains how you meet all the essential criteria for a post. If it doesn't, the manager reading it could easily assume you aren't right for the job.

During the shortlisting process your skills, experience and knowledge will be assessed against the selection criteria outlined on the person specification. ***It is therefore very important that you address all the areas identified in the person specification separately and in the order given (E1, E2, E3 etc.)***

Try to give examples for all the essential criteria. Think about relevant skills and experience you've gained in a paid job, volunteer role, work experience placement, school, university or other area of your life.

For example, if the job asks for someone who works well in a team, you could write something like: "I worked on a group project in my previous work experience placement. My role included working with others to develop and deliver the final presentation. Teamwork was crucial to its success."

Do this for each of the criteria. All person specifications are different so if you save your application form, make sure you change the information to suit each job you apply for.

Now make sure you've completed the rest of the form correctly, and included all of your work history (including work experience and volunteering), qualifications and other courses.

References

All offers of appointment depend on receiving references satisfactory to the Council. This must cover a minimum employment period of 3 years. You must give at least two referees that have had managerial/supervisory responsibility for you, one of whom must be your current/most recent employer. If you have not worked before, give the name of someone who can comment on your ability to do the job for example, a teacher.

Further advice on who is suitable as a referee is available from HR.

The Council may ask for substitute or additional referees, if the ones provided are not deemed to be suitable. Requests for references will normally, but not always, be sought after the interview when a conditional job offer has been made. However, for posts with substantial

access to children and/or vulnerable adults, requests for references may be made prior to interview.

We will specifically ask if disciplinary action has ever been taken against you or was pending, and details of your sickness record. You may ask to see these references, however, some of the information may relate to a third party, e.g. authorship. This type of information cannot be disclosed to you unless:

- The third party has consented for it to be released
Or
- Your right to know this information and its source outweighs the right of privacy of the third party.

Obtaining references can often causes long delays. Please help us to speed this up by checking that you have:

- Included up-to-date contact details for your referees – including an email address
- Checked that your referees are happy to give you a reference
- Informed your referees that we'll be contacting them

Disability Confident employer

The Disability Confident scheme is a government-led initiative designed to support employers to make their workplaces more open, accessible, diverse and inclusive. It's designed to help employers recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent.

The Council is committed to ensuring that employees who have a disability are given every possible assistance in the workplace and we operate a guaranteed interview scheme for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria. We are committed to providing support to applicants who request reasonable adjustments to be made during the recruitment process and throughout their career with us.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) covers a wide range of conditions, including long-term health issues such as migraine, asthma, eczema, heart conditions and mental health issues. A condition is covered by the DDA if it has a significant negative effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for more than 12 months. If you'd like us to make any adjustments for your interview, then please make sure you complete the relevant section of the application form.

You don't have to discuss your disability or health condition at interview, but we encourage you to if you might need adjustments making for work. If you don't feel able to do this, then it's important that you discuss this with the recruiting manager as soon as possible after you receive your offer letter. This will enable us to make the preparations we need, ready for your first day.

Declaring a criminal conviction

Having a criminal conviction doesn't necessarily mean that you won't be offered a job with us. Each case is considered on an individual basis, in compliance with the Rehabilitation of

Offenders Act. We'll look at things like how relevant the incident was to the post you've applied for, how recent it was, and if there appears to be a pattern of offending.

It's important that you honestly answer questions about any conviction, caution, warning, reprimand or bind-over. If you don't, this is fraud and any job offer may be withdrawn, or in some circumstances you could be dismissed from a job. Depending on the post, you may also need to:

- Declare these even if they are considered spent. Jobs that involve access to persons who are disabled or addicted to drugs or alcohol or under 19 or over 65 are exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Exception Order.
- Have a Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check.
- Have additional, more in depth checks surrounding the protection of vulnerable adults and children.

All conditional job offers will be subject to a successful DBS clearance where required for the job role.

Submitting your application

- You can save your application at any time and come back to complete it later.
- Make sure you've answered all of the mandatory fields.
- When it's completed, make sure that spellings and dates etc. are correct –double check it and ask someone else to read it if possible. An application form is a legal document, so it's vital to complete it honestly and accurately.
- All done? Click 'Submit' before the closing date or it won't be accepted.

What happens next

If you're unsuccessful in your interview, we'll let you know by email. You can get feedback on your interview from the chair of the interview panel if you'd like by contacting the resourcing advisor you've been dealing with. This may be pre-arranged at your interview in the event you are unsuccessful.

If you are successful, we'll make an offer of employment (Conditional Statement of Particulars) subject to satisfactory references, health clearance, Disclosure and Barring Service Clearance (if applicable) right to work in the UK and qualification/professional registration checks. This formal conditional offer will be in writing from our resourcing department. If you accept the offer, we'll begin to work on your pre-employment clearances. All communication will be done via our applicant tracking system Trac. You'll then receive a contract of employment before you start.

Good luck!