



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Guidance Notes
on
Completing
your
Application Form

Introduction

Completing the application form is the first stage of the selection procedure. The information you provide in it is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be shortlisted for interview, so you are strongly advised to complete the application form as fully as possible. Pre-prepared CVs will not be considered.

It is very important that you complete your application form accurately and include all the information you think is relevant.

The following notes have been designed to help you complete your application form as effectively as possible, in order to ensure that it is treated fairly.

1. The application form will be photocopied, so please complete it in black ink.
2. Read through each section of the application form carefully. You may find it helpful to do a rough draft first.

3. Equal Opportunities

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council recognises the importance of providing Equal Opportunities in Employment. It is the Council's policy to ensure that all appointments are made on merit.

In order to monitor the effectiveness and success of this policy you are asked to provide the information requested in the recruitment monitoring tear-off sheet which is attached to the application form you have been sent.

The details supplied by you in that form are confidential, but will form part of the personnel record of the successful candidate.

Whilst the monitoring form will be detached from the application form before shortlisting takes place those candidates who have declared themselves as disabled will be identified before this stage. This information will only be used in shortlisting to ensure that candidates with disabilities who meet the essential requirements of the job can benefit from the Council's guaranteed interview scheme. This scheme forms part of the Council's policy on employment opportunities for people with disabilities. No other information from the monitoring form will be considered in any way during the appointment process. (Details of the Council's policy on employment opportunities for people with disabilities is available on request from the Divisional Personnel Manager).

The following definition may provide a useful framework for candidates to consider whether their condition would be considered as a disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as a ***"physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities"***.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU PUT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE TEAR OFF SHEET SO THAT YOU CAN BE CONTACTED. THERE IS NO OTHER SPACE FOR THIS INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION FORM

4. Employment Experience

It is essential here that you include all relevant work experience that you have had.

This will include part-time work or work undertaken on a voluntary basis, particularly if you have not been employed on a full-time basis before.

Outlining your previous work experience or other responsibilities may help you uncover skills which you have taken for granted and which are a clear sign of your ability to do a job.

5. Supporting Information

This section of the application form is very important, for this is where you make your case for the job.

- a) Read through the advertisement for the job, together with the person specification you have been sent which describes the necessary skills, experience and qualifications we are looking for. Pay particular attention to those areas on the person specification described as essential. Read the job description and try to get a clear view of what the job involves.
- b) You will be assessed on whether you have the ability, experience and qualifications to carry out the duties of the job. Therefore, describe any relevant experience and make sure that you tell us in what ways you match the requirements of the job. This may be from your current or previous job, or from community or voluntary work, or from skills transferable from other life experience, particularly if you have been out of paid employment for a long time. For example, you may have considerable domestic responsibilities, or may organise social or community activities in your spare time.
- c) Ensure that the information you provide is well organised and relevant. It should show to what extent you have gained the skills and experience necessary for the post. Give specific examples of the work you have been involved in and write in a positive way. Always remember to specify your responsibilities rather than those of your section or department.

6. Education and Qualifications

Apart from giving details of formal education and qualifications, mention any short\non-qualification courses that you may have attended to improve your knowledge and skills, if they are relevant to the job you are applying for.

7. References

You should provide the names and addresses of two people who know you and who are able to comment on your suitability for the post. One of these should be your current or most recent employer. If you have been out of paid employment for a long time give the name of someone who is aware of the transferable skills you have acquired. If you are a school or college leaver, then your headteacher or your tutor's name should be given. In all cases make sure you use someone who knows your capabilities, can comment on your reliability and is aware of your potential.

References may be taken up prior to interview and without further communication with you. It is advisable to make sure that your referees know you have used their names before we contact them to obtain the references. If this is likely to cause problems with your present employer tick the box provided on the application form.

However, it is mandatory that a reference is obtained from your present employer or most recent which is satisfactory to us, before you could be offered employment. Please note that we may seek references from earlier employers, and that it is Council policy to ask for details relating to sickness absence.

8. You may also have to undergo police checks for some vacancies.

9. General

When completed, read through your application form carefully, checking for inconsistencies, errors or omissions. It is essential that you provide full information - any perceived gaps in employment history for example will be explored at interview if you are shortlisted. You may find it useful to ask someone else to read it through and to keep a copy for yourself. Make sure your application form is sent in well before the closing date. Applications received after the published closing date cannot normally be considered.

10. The Interview

You will be sent a letter inviting you for interview if you are shortlisted and outlining any other tests you may have to undergo. Members of the interview panel will ask you questions so that they can decide how well you match the requirements of the job. Some of the questions may relate to information you have given your application form. These questions enable the panel to make a fair assessment of each candidate so that the reasons for their decisions are clear, consistent and justifiable. You should, therefore, not be worried about the panel taking notes.

11. We hope you will be successful in your application. However, if you are not, please do not be discouraged from re-applying. Your skills and experience may be what we need for our next vacancy.