



North Yorkshire
County Council

Headteacher Recruitment and Selection Guidance

To be used in conjunction with other relevant documents, including Template letters and forms

Available from [CYPS Info](#) (Human Resources section)

Status of Policy: Revised

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Introduction

Recruiting the right people with the right skills at the right time is essential to maximising school performance and realising the potential of every student. Prior to commencing a recruitment campaign it is important that you are personally prepared and plan your campaign to ensure a successful, safe and robust outcome.

This document has been designed to provide you with a high-level overview of the features and processes for a successful Headteacher recruitment process. It is advised that governors read this document thoroughly.

In addition to this document it is essential that the chair of the recruitment panel (normally the chair of governors) completes appropriate Safer Recruitment training as required by Department of Education and detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Appropriate safer recruitment training that meets the requirements detailed in KCSIE is an online learning package available from NYCC at a cost of £25 per individual.

A member of the selection panel is also advised to complete Equality and Diversity training. Appropriate training is available from NYCC via an online package at a cost of £25 per individual.

You can access both packages as a reduced cost of £40 per individual.

Please contact roger.smith@northyorks.gov.uk to discuss your requirements and to arrange access to the online packages.

Governors should also become familiar with the [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) document](#), an important reference document.

Although it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to appoint the Headteacher, there is support available to help and assist with this important task:

- Your Local Authority (LA) Adviser is available as a technical adviser to the process, and will attend meetings to provide advice to determine the needs analysis as well as attending the shortlisting and assessment days.
- NYCC's specialist recruitment team, Resourcing Solutions are also able to support, coordinate and manage the recruitment process. Resourcing Solutions (01609 535585 or resourcingsolutions@northyorks.gov.uk) offer a range of traded packages to take the pain out of Headteacher recruitment and help to ensure this vital appointment progresses well:

End to end campaign management	Entire recruitment process handled: composing key documents and advertisements, management and delivery of the recruitment and selection process, application management and engagement, communications and clearance checks handled throughout
Advertising	Designing, creating and publishing job descriptions, person specifications and advertisement. We will target and engage with quality candidates, using our specialist recruitment and labour market knowledge.
Candidate management	Using our online application system to manage and maintain contact with the candidate to ensure they are engaged and the process is swift and flexible. Pre-employment clearances, candidate care, support to the panel to meet their legal duties.
Assessment Event	Design and coordinator of the assessment and selection event to ensure that the applicants are assessed against the key criteria of the role, and that they governing body is provided with comprehensive information upon which they can make a robust selection decision. Within this offer are detailed packs for candidates, panel members and key stakeholders, including interview questions for the panel.



Resourcing and
Reward Headteacher

Getting Started with Recruitment

It is important to prepare fully before recruiting. Initial meetings should be held to discuss and agree the recruitment process, timescales and how and when information will be communicated to stakeholders. In addition, a Needs Analysis should be completed in conjunction with the LA Advisor/Diocesan Adviser (see separate factsheet). This document is key to the success of the process.

Governors will also wish to discuss the management of the outgoing Headteacher, the expectations of staff and the composition of the selection panel.

The LA adviser will attend key meetings to support the governing body; Needs Analysis, Shortlisting and Assessment Event and will be available to provide verbal advice outside of these meetings. The diocesan adviser will also attend meetings of faith schools. Resourcing Solutions are able to attend meetings however the time will be recharged.

For more information regarding preparation, please see [Preparation factsheet](#).

Governors should also consider how stakeholder relationships will be managed at an early stage. Please see the [Managing Stakeholders factsheet](#).

Preparation Checklist			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Contact the Local Authority / diocese adviser on receiving news of current headteacher's resignation			
Consider different models of leadership/ school organisation			
Arrange and hold initial meeting (Chair, LA adviser / diocese recruitment adviser)			
Contact the Resourcing Solutions team to gain details of recruitment support packages (01609 535585, resourcingandreward@northyorks.gov.uk)			
Circulate this guidance document to the full Governing Body.			
Arrange and hold full Governing Body meeting			
Determine Headteacher Pay Range (HPR) after gaining advice from the Schools HR Advisory Service (01609 798343, schoolshradvisory@northyorks.gov.uk)			
Agree any interim arrangements between resignation (ensure written resignation is received from current Headteacher) of current headteacher and appointment of new headteacher			
Agree selection panel members and ensure they have access to a full copy of the guidance, and can commit to the entire process, as the panel cannot be changed once started			
Ensure at least one governor is trained in safer recruitment (Safer Recruitment training package is available on the Learning Zone)			
Create timetable			
Key Documents:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headteacher Recruitment Guidance 			

All the necessary checklists and templates are contained within this document or links provided to them. The above is available for download from the headteacher recruitment section of the cyps.info website.

Needs Analysis

The Needs Analysis is a very important process in enabling the Governing Body to reflect upon the needs and priorities of the individual school, and develop an understanding of the characteristics required of an effective headteacher. It should be completed as early as possible as this document will inform the recruitment process and flow through to the Job Description, Person Specification and job advert.

On completion of the Needs Analysis, you will have identified a number of priority areas. Do you need a hands-on leader with exceptional communication and people skills? Or a visionary leader with a strong track record in raising standards? Using the information obtained in the Needs Analysis, you will now be able to identify the key skills and qualities required in your new headteacher.

The LA has produced a key competency grid outlining the '[Personal Characteristics of Effective Headteachers](#)'. This outlines the characteristics, skills and capabilities required for effective performance, and links clearly to the [National Standards for Headteachers](#). Potential headteachers are likely to offer a range of experience, skills, aptitudes and capabilities. It will not be possible to assess every characteristic you would like in a headteacher, so it is good practice to focus your attention on those the Needs Analysis has already identified as a priority. It is recommended that you use the competency grid to select the 5 or 6 key competencies most relevant for the post of headteacher in your school. Governors may wish to independently reflect on the key characteristics they consider priorities. This information is then shared with the panel with a view to reaching agreement on the key characteristics for the post.

For more information please refer to the [Needs Analysis factsheet](#)

Job Description and Person Specification

The key competencies derived from the Needs Analysis will now inform the creation of a job description and person specification. The completed job description and person specification must be included in the information provided to potential applicants. If you are using the Resourcing Solutions Advertising Service, we will be happy to assist in developing these documents.

Job Description and Person Specification Checklist			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Consider job description template and modify according to school context			
Use key competencies to develop person specification			
Ensure person specification clearly identifies the skills, knowledge and attributes required to deliver the job description, which in turn must be in line with the Needs Analysis			

Key Documents:

- Completed Needs Analysis
- Template job description
- Template person specification
- Example Completed Person Specification
- School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document

For more information please refer to the [Job Description and Person Specification factsheet](#)

Vacancy Advertisement

There is a national skill shortage of Headteachers; it is a candidate driven market and no matter how good your schools reputation and track record is, you will have to work hard to attract high calibre applicants to your vacancy.

Your advert is your opportunity to reach the widest possible range of applicants, and let them know what you have to offer them. The advert must be written with the job seeker in mind, and tell them what is attractive about this role and why they should wish to have this opportunity.

Vacancies should be advertised to ensure the widest possible coverage on a value for money basis. Advertising costs must be met from the school budget – but remember that it is well worth investing to find the right candidate. It is recommended that you should always advertise in appropriate national media, and the NYCC website. If you are using the Resourcing Solutions advertising service, they will ensure you receive the best deals available. If you are not, you should contact Employment Support on 01609 532190 or EmploymentSupportService@northyorks.gov.uk to benefit from NYCC discounts.

The work already done in drawing up the Needs Analysis, Job Description and Person Specification will greatly inform this part of the process, making the job of writing a factually correct and targeted advert a far easier task.

Governors should be aware that the process of moving from Needs Analysis, Job Description and Person Specification to agreed advert can take some time and that then arranging for that agreed advert to appear in appropriate media will take additional time depending of publication dates, deadline dates, and lead times. Those opting to use the NYCC dedicated campaign site facility or print media (available via Resourcing Solutions) will need to allow time for the advert to be designed, produced and proofed.

Governors should also consider:

- NYCC has a contract with an advertising agency and multiple contracts directly with media suppliers, e.g. TES – NYCC can obtain a significant discount which is not available to schools on an individual basis. Schools have the potential to make considerable costs savings (i.e. typically at least 12.5%).

- When an advert is placed through NYCC, your advertisement will automatically be published on the NYCC website www.nyccjobs.co.uk and our social media sites.

Receipt of Applications

You will need to agree the process for handling completed application forms.

It is good practice to specify a named contact to be responsible for collating all application forms and removing the personal/equal opportunities details of candidates prior to circulating to the selection panel. This should not be a member of the selection panel. This information is removed to ensure that shortlisting decisions are based on the objective selection criteria, not influenced by age, gender, etc. It may be beneficial to provide an email address so all applications can be received electronically, and receipt of completed applications can be acknowledged by return email. If you are using the Resourcing Solutions Candidate Management option, anonymised applications will be emailed to you on the first working day after the closing date. Full applications are then available for those selected for interview.

For more information please refer to the [Vacancy Advertising factsheet](#)

Shortlisting

The key outcome of the shortlisting meeting is to identify the candidates who most closely meet the person specification (including all the 'essential criteria'). Keep a full written record of all decisions made and why they were taken, using the template Shortlisting Grids (downloadable from the shortlist and interview section of the cyps.info website), to ensure information on all candidates is recorded objectively and clearly, allowing panel members to individually assess applications and then collate the scores into a single table representing the selection panels decisions. Recording your reasoning throughout the screening process will also help you to provide detailed, constructive feedback to anyone not selected for interview. This is for two reasons:

- It is possible for a selection decision to be challenged under equal opportunities legislation and your records will provide important evidence if this has to be defended at an employment tribunal. For this reason, all notes relating to decisions made throughout the recruitment process must be kept securely for six months after the interview date and then destroyed, in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Candidates requesting feedback should expect to receive constructive, frank and honest comment that will be useful to them in any future applications.

Pre-employment clearances

In preparation for the assessment event it is important to know what pre-employment clearances you require as many of these can be gained as part of the assessment event.

This stage of the recruitment process consists of 5 stages

1. Obtain full and satisfactory references (between shortlisting and assessment, follow-up with gaining absence data after offer)
2. Check qualifications (during assessment)
3. Secure proof of candidates' right to work in the UK (during assessment)
4. Undertake NCTL Teachers Prohibited list check

5. Undertake DBS check (once offer has been made but prior to start date)
6. Establish fitness to work (only once an offer has been made but prior to start date)

It is good practice for a member of the selection panel - ideally someone who has completed the Safer Recruitment Training - to take responsibility for ensuring compliance and safeguarding checks are rigorously applied, following up references, and conducting a pre-interview on the assessment day. Resourcing Solutions are able to manage the clearance stage as part of their Headteacher recruitment service.

Please note all checks must also be applied to any internal candidates.

There is a Safer Recruitment Checklist in Appendix 1 to help keep you on track with this process.

Pre-Interview checks

You are advised to complete any administrative checks at the start of the formal assessment process to:

- Obtain and check their proof of identification, qualification certificates etc. All documentation should be photocopied by the school, signed, dated and kept on file (remembering to destroy documents obtained for candidates who are not appointed)
- Scrutinise references and follow up any concerns
- Ask candidates if there are any issues around safeguarding that they wish to disclose before continuing with the assessment process

References

Request references to obtain factual information to support and confirm rather than influence – your selection. References should not be used as assessment criteria. They should be considered by the full selection panel only when you are proposing to make an offer of employment, to ensure they do not affect the panel's perceptions of the candidates during the process. At least **two** references should be obtained prior to interview, with the permission of the candidate.

Details of the referees will be shown on the application form but care must be taken to ensure that references are obtained from appropriate sources:

- One of the references must be obtained from the current or most recent employer. In the case of a candidate employed as a headteacher this will be obtained from his/her LA, or from the Chair of Governors if the school is independent. For a candidate who is currently a teacher, assistant headteacher or a deputy headteacher, one of the references should be obtained from his/her current Headteacher. Governing bodies of VA schools may also request a faith reference in addition to the two standard references. Seek advice from your diocesan adviser.
- Where an applicant is not currently working with children it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children, as well as the current employer
- Open references or testimonials/character references must not be accepted
- Always check the capacity and position of the reference provider and their relationship to the candidate. The reference provider must be in an appropriate position to provide a reference (e.g. current or former line manager). References should be obtained from a business

address rather than a private address unless there is a good reason to do otherwise (e.g. individual needing to provide the reference has since retired)

- You must ensure references are relevant to the candidate's work history and accurately cover the work carried out by each candidate in recent years. For this reason, you may request additional references if, for example:
 - A candidate has changed post a number of times in the last few years
 - A candidate has supplied a reference for a post they only occupied for a few months
 - A candidate has supplied a reference from several years ago but has occupied other posts since
 - There are unexplained gaps in a candidate's employment history

Please note you must ask candidates' permission before pursuing additional references.

The designated governor should check references before the interviews. They should then discuss with Resourcing Solutions

- any discrepancies between the application form and reference content (for example, cross-reference leaving dates and reasons for leaving given by both candidate and referee)
- any disciplinary issues or causes for concern surrounding the candidate's suitability to work with children. These must be clarified at interview with the candidate. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case and advice should be sought from Resourcing Solutions

This will allow any issues or concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and, if necessary, taken up with the candidate during the assessment process. This process is particularly important in relation to the safeguarding of children.

The reference letter

For all reference requests use the [Reference Request pro-forma](#), to ensure consistency and that comprehensive information is received in line with safeguarding and suitability for employment.

You should also inform the reference provider that the applicant could seek access to the supplied reference information under the Data Protection Act and the school would be obliged, in most circumstances, to provide this.

References which are requested prior to interview cannot include absence/health related questions (Equalities Act 2010); hence in this situation referees will need to be sent an absence reference request after a conditional offer is made ([proforma available](#))

See [letter to request a reference and a reference pro forma](#).

Verbal Follow-Up References

Verbal references should be sought by the nominated panel member to follow up the written content. This will provide an opportunity to check the content, validity and robustness of the reference. A verbal reference should supplement a written one, allowing you to probe existing content in more detail. For this reason, it is important you only speak to the person who provided the original reference.

To ensure a fair and consistent recruitment process, you should verbally follow up the written references of all shortlisted candidates.

Details of the conversation should be recorded – please see the [Record of Reference Follow-up Conversation form](#)

Troubleshooting – Problems obtaining References

- If, due to exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to obtain a reference prior to interview on the candidate you later wish to appoint, the reference must be obtained retrospectively, examined and any concerns it raises must be resolved satisfactorily.
- An offer of employment should be conditional, as it may be withdrawn if references prove to be unsatisfactory, and the candidate has not commenced employment. Advice from your Resourcing Solutions should be sought in these instances to avoid any decisions that may be considered discriminatory.
- Some applicants may not give permission for references to be sought prior to interview. In these instances, you must make it clear that any employment offered will remain subject to receipt of satisfactory references (as above).
- In cases where you wish to seek additional references from a candidate but they do not give you permission to do so, ask them to explain why they have refused permission. Explain that additional references are needed or you will not be able to demonstrate that you have received full and satisfactory references, so will not be able to offer the candidate a post or take their application any further.

Proof of Qualifications

Proof of all essential qualifications should be received and photocopied during the assessment process. Candidates must bring the original documents with them; photocopies are not acceptable. Remember to accept non-UK equivalent qualifications where appropriate e.g. International Baccalaureate in place of GCE 'A' levels. Candidates who have mislaid/lost their original qualifications will be required to gain new replacement certificates as the offer is conditional upon receipt of these.

Proof of Right to work in the UK

It is a criminal offence to employ a person who does not have permission to live and work in the UK; employers who negligently hire illegal workers could face heavy fines and a severely damaged reputation. Candidates must provide original relevant documentation to prove they have leave to enter and remain in the UK and are not subject to a condition precluding them from taking up employment. It is the responsibility of the selection panel to obtain, verify and copy all candidates' original documents. This includes staff currently employed by NYCC.

For further information on appropriate documentation please see the [Prevention of Illegal Working-managers Guide](#).

When inviting candidates to interview, please ensure you ask them to bring along relevant documentation.

What if candidates don't bring this documentation?

Any offer of appointment must be conditional upon proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK using appropriate original documents. This includes internal applicants.

NCTL – Teachers Prohibited List checks

Schools are required to carry out further checks in advance of appointing teaching staff, including headteachers, to establish that the individual is not subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order. This check is in addition to the DBS check and Governing bodies must record the check and outcome on the Single Central Record. Guidance on how to undertake the check is detailed in the **Guidance on NCTL prohibited list checks.**

DBS Checks

An **enhanced DBS disclosure is mandatory for the post of headteacher**. If the applicant is currently working for NYCC they may already have the required clearance, but this must be verified by sending an email to employmentsupportservice@northyorks.gov.uk. This should include the name of the candidate, their date of birth, their current school and the post for which they are applying.

Successful candidates for posts subject to enhanced checks must not start work until a satisfactory disclosure certificate has been received. Please ensure all candidates bring to interview the required documentation for a DBS check (see [DBS Online Process full guidance and supporting documents](#)).

The successful candidate will need to provide the necessary evidence for the DBS, which you will need to verify. Please see [DBS Online Process full guidance and supporting documents](#).

Photocopied documents relating to unsuccessful candidates must be destroyed straight away. Those for the person offered the post should be retained only until the DBS check is completed

Rehabilitation of Offenders

Please note that the headteacher post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. This means that candidates will have to declare **all** convictions, even if spent.

Medical Clearance

Once an individual has been offered a post conditional upon pre-employment clearances (and never prior) you may ask appropriate health-related questions. At this point you should send out a [pre-employment health questionnaire](#). The decision whether to confirm appointment based on satisfactory medical clearances or whether to withdraw the offer based on unsatisfactory clearances is an important one. It is important to remember that offers of employment can only be withdrawn prior to commencement of employment and withdrawal should only be contemplated after considering whether reasonable adjustments can be made, and advice has been sought from HR.

You must ensure that when making an offer of employment it is made clear that the offer is subject to any outstanding employment clearances. This includes references, medical clearance, NCTL Teachers Prohibited List check and an Enhanced DBS check. A conditional offer of employment can only be withdrawn if the person has not commenced work therefore the successful candidate should not start working until all clearances are in place

Pre-employment Clearances Checklist			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments

Request references – send out letter/email and pro forma			
Collate references and send to nominated panel member			
Nominated panel member to follow-up references with telephone conversation			
Keep written records of any points of concern to be raised at interview			
Start to complete Compliance Candidate Checklist for each applicant			
Key Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference request letter • Reference pro forma • Record of Reference Follow-up Conversation • Prevention of illegal working – Managers Guide • DBS online Manager Verification Guidance • DBS online Applicants Guidance • DBS Identity Check Guidance • Compliance Candidate Checklist • E-DBS Manager verification form • Guidance on NTCL Teachers Prohibited List checks 			

INTERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

The interview and assessment stage is your opportunity to measure the extent to which shortlisted candidates have the skills, abilities and knowledge required to do the job.

The assessment process should consist of a number of rigorous, robust and valid forms of assessment activities, providing objective information on which to base the selection decision. If using the service, Resourcing Solutions will provide information on a range of assessment exercises that will draw out evidence against the key competencies decided at the start of the process. Please note you must conduct a formal panel interview as part of the process.

Care must be taken to ensure that the exercises are fair and equal for all candidates. This needs careful consideration if you have internal candidates.

Stage 1 - Planning the Assessment Process

The 'what'

You should assess candidates against your 5 or 6 key competencies from the person specification. This will ensure:

- You remain focused on the criteria your Needs Analysis has identified as essential for undertaking the post
- You are assessing in line with your original person specification
- You use an objective and fair assessment criteria based on ability to do the job
- Your process is consistent from initial shortlisting through to the final decision – you are maintaining the 'golden thread' of key competencies that runs throughout your entire recruitment and selection process

The 'how'

The selection panel must agree on a range of exercises to assess each key competency. The current headteacher should not be involved in the assessment activities for the new appointment.

When considering tasks for the assessment stage it is important that:

- All tasks assess at least one key competency, and all key competencies are assessed in some way through a range of different exercises. This will ensure the process is robust and thorough and allow candidates to demonstrate the various competencies in different contexts
- There is some variation in the tasks. This might include a 'performance management conversation' scenario, a presentation, an informal tour of the school, and the required formal panel interview. This will ensure you get a rounded impression of the candidates.
- You recognise the differences between interviews and other tasks. Whilst in tasks you will tend to be observing the candidates in action and directly assessing their behaviour, in interviews you will be asking candidates to provide specific examples of how they have demonstrated these competencies in the past.

It is very important that you have a consistent and transparent scoring method through the assessment event.

Marking Grids

Marking Criteria

T = Threshold (meets threshold)

Used for pass/fail criteria. There is evidence the candidate meets the threshold i.e. qualifications

0 = Unacceptable (weakness or not observed)

This is no evidence that the candidate meets the minimum criteria. The candidate is neither able to meet the minimum criteria nor shows any sign of being able to do so within reasonable timescales and with reasonable training input

1 = Less than Acceptable (needs development)

The candidate shows *some* understanding or knowledge of the criteria and has the potential to develop the skills and knowledge required with appropriate training and development

2 = Acceptable (meets standards)

The candidate has evidenced that they meet the minimum requirement specified for the position

3 = More than Acceptable (strength)

The candidate has evidenced that they exceed the minimum requirement. This area is considered a strength

You should draw up marking grids for each member of the selection panel.

[Template marking grids](#) for each exercise and for candidates' overall scores are available. This includes a grid allowing the panel to collate all candidates' final scores and decide who to appoint / take through to final interview. The LA recommends that the above marking scheme is used.

This system is useful as it allows you to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of a candidate across the various competencies. It is not about the total score candidates achieve but about what the numbers represent. To be deemed suitable for appointment, candidates should score a minimum of '2' across the board. However, there may be certain circumstances where candidates have perhaps scored well overall but received a '1' in a particular area. This may not be a problem as long as the required skills and knowledge can be developed within the first 3 months of commencing in post (the Governing Body will need to consider how these skills could be developed as part of candidate induction).

You are strongly advised to avoid ranking candidates. This is because you should be assessing each candidate individually and objectively and based on their ability to do the job. Ranking does not tell you anything about a candidate's ability to do the job but simply compares candidates to each other. If you have a weak field it may be that even your top-ranked candidates are not suitable for the post

Some exercises or competencies can be given a heavier weighting than others – please speak to Resourcing Solutions for further information.

Headteacher Recruitment Recommended Competency Assessments

The following table details which exercises might be used to assess certain competencies. These exercises are available as ready-made tools which can be adopted:

Assessment Matrix		Occupational Personality assessment	Targeted interview panels	Presentation exercises	Performance Management Conversation	Lesson Observation - feedback	Lesson -Teaching	Performance and Vision assessment
Characteristic	Key Competencies							
Personal Conviction	• Passionate commitment to Education	X	X	X		X	X	X
	• Decision making and calculated risk taking	X	X		X			
	• Resilience	X	X	X				
Performance Focus	• Clarity of vision	X	X	X				X
	• Strategic thinking	X	X					X
	• Analysing and information seeking	X	X		X			
	• Setting and achieving challenging goals	X	X		X	X		
	• Accepts accountability and holding others to account	X			X	X		
	• High expectations of self and others	X		X	X	X	X	
Communicating	• Skilful communication according to audience	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	• Influencing	X		X	X			
	• Building networks	X						X
Interpersonal Sensitivity	• Respect for others	X	X		X	X	X	X
	• Political sensitivity	X	X			X		
	• Adhering to principles and values	X	X			X		X
Managing Effectiveness	• Partnership working	X	X					
	• Building effective teams	X	X	X	X		X	
Personal Development	• Reflective	X	X	X			X	
	• Seeks organisational reflection	X	X	X			X	X

Assessment Activities

Occupational tests and exercises have been shown to be very accurate predictors of performance in post, more so than interviews. There is more data on the validity of ability tests for predicting training and job success than any other method of selection. Assessment activities can largely be split into two groups; those that assess behaviour, and those that assess skill and ability.

The Resourcing Solutions team are able to provide ready to use assessment tools for the following assessments:

- Interviews
- Presentation Exercises (staff presentation, student assembly, act of worship, final interview presentation)
- Performance Management Conversation
- Lesson teaching
- School Performance & Vision Assessment
- Scenarios exercise

Many more assessments are also available, for example group exercise, data analysis, numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning.

The 'When'

Once you have agreed on a set of tests and exercises, a structured timetable can be drawn up. Whilst you should allow the assessment tasks selected to shape the structure and length of the process rather than vice versa, a typical recruitment process will last two days, with the bulk of assessment taking place on day 1, followed by a narrowing of the field down to typically two or three candidates to take forward to final interview on day 2.

Timetable Tips

- Build some time into the process for the candidates to learn more about the school. e.g. guided tours, lunches or other non-assessed events. The most effective assessment processes will allow candidates to learn about the school through assessed activities.
- Consider a rota system to use time effectively and ensure candidates do not have to sit around waiting but are kept engaged with tasks. The Resourcing Solutions Team will be able to advise on this
- Ensure informal parts of the day are not used as part of the assessment criteria, including informal lunch breaks etc.
- To ensure effective use of time and allow candidates to get a real feel for the school, invite them to explore the school individually during any breaks or gaps between sessions
- Make sure you build in sufficient breaks (both for candidates and for the selection panel to meet throughout the day)
- Ensure you build in time to photocopy the relevant documents such as evidence of qualifications, proof of identification and proof of right to work in the UK. This might occur in a pre-interview session during the morning of day 1 (see section 6)
- Ensure you build in opportunities to probe candidates' suitability to work with children and young people. This might be introduced in a pre-interview session and explored in more detail at final interview
- Consider timings carefully – it might be best to avoid holding formal interviews during school breaks and lunch if the school tends to be noisy at these times. Lesson changeover times may not be ideal but may be unavoidable
- Build in sufficient time for the selection panel to write up any notes, or score an exercise, before having to move onto the next session
- Consider how you might engage staff and students in some of the exercises, allowing them to participate in the process

Whilst it may seem challenging to fit everything you need into the two day process, this can usually be done with the use of effective planning and timetabling. For many candidates, this will be a big time commitment.

Practical Considerations

Prior to the assessment process you will also need to address the following:

- **Accommodation**

Accommodation must be agreed and booked. This should include a 'waiting area' or 'base' for the candidates between activities, bases for lunch and refreshments, suitable venues for assessment tasks and interviews and a base area for the selection panel to discuss and feedback on exercises. It may be an option to use an external venue, but cost will be a consideration, and you will want the candidate to be able to form their own judgements regarding the school, and if it is right for them.

- **Equipment and Documentation**

All equipment must be arranged (this might include pens, paper, flipcharts, stopwatch, clock). Please note that if you have decided to use a professional assessor from the Resourcing Solutions team they will provide candidate and assessor briefing and assessment materials where appropriate. Provide interview expenses claims forms for candidates

- **Assessors**

Assessors must be arranged (for example, assessors from the Resourcing Solutions team who may assist the selection panel during a group exercise or role play scenario). Please see the Stakeholders factsheet for further information.

- **Refreshments**

Arrange all refreshments as required, including lunch. Ensure you check with candidates for any special dietary requirements

- **Greeting**

Agree who will welcome and meet candidates and escort them to and from interviews/ tasks/ lunch

- **Tours**

Agree arrangements for any guided tours etc.

- **Equal Opportunities**

Provide candidates with sufficient information in advance on the selection process, including any tests to be completed prior to the assessment dates. This will give candidates time to prepare and to declare any queries, special requirements or a disability which may affect their performance. Ensure you are meeting the needs of any shortlisted candidates who have informed you of any additional requirements or requests for reasonable adjustments. For example, ensure accommodation is physically accessible and assessment materials are provided in appropriate formats.

Interviews

The selection panel must prepare a set of interview questions based on the requirements of the post and agree the issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people that they will explore with each candidate. In addition, panel members must decide how questions will be allocated and how the interviews will be structured. Resourcing Solutions will be able to recommend questions that link to the key competencies you wish to assess. Please see the

form '[Example Interview Marking Grid](#)'. There should always be a minimum of two selection panel members on each interview panel. This will help to avoid assessor bias as evaluations and decisions of individual interviewers will have to be justified to the other interview panel member(s).

An assessment tool for interviews is available as part of the Resourcing Solutions service.

Carrying out the Assessment Process

A number of common assessor biases have been identified which may lead an assessor to be biased in favour of or against a participant. Biases in either direction reduce the objectivity and validity of the assessment process. Bias can occur for all exercises but may be more likely during interviews as these involve a greater element of subjectivity and judgement. Common biases include:

1. **Central Tendency** – the tendency to go for the 'easy option' by using only ratings in the middle of the scale as these might be seen to require less justification
2. **The Logical Error** – tendency to score a participant highly on two criteria that seem to be logically related but in fact are often not
3. **The Error of Leniency** – the tendency to be unduly lenient or cautious in marking
4. **Stereotyping** – making positive or negative judgments on the basis of surface characteristics. Care should be taken to ensure that interviewers do not stereotype candidates into a particular class or category and assume particular behaviour characteristics associated with a specific group
5. **Halo and Horns** – the tendency to assume that because a participant does well in one exercise / competency they will do well in another. Also the tendency to label candidates as 'good' or 'bad' candidates based on irrelevant factors such as how well you got on with them personally during an informal chat, their hobbies or interests or their appearance, and then allow this good/bad label to shape your assessment
6. **Mirror-image Error** - also known as the "similar to me effect" – interviewers may often unwittingly give preference to candidates they perceive as having a similar background, career history, personality or attitudes to themselves or the current headteacher.
7. **First Impressions** – the tendency to let first impressions cloud subsequent judgement
8. **Rushed Decision Making** – spending insufficient time evaluating participants

To avoid these biases, make sure you reflect on your own likes and dislikes so you can more easily distance them from the assessment process. You are assessing the relevance and completeness of their answers to the interview questions, and other perceptions must be set aside. The use of fair, objective assessment criteria will also help you to avoid assessor bias. You must also ensure you allow sufficient time following each exercise to reflect, evaluate and allocate marks.

Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Agree on assessment activities			
Agree who will 'meet and greet' candidates			
Is someone in charge of logistics / movement of candidates between tasks on the day?			
Agree number of days for assessment process			
Allocate responsibilities for different tasks and activities that form the assessment process			
Agree content and structure of formal interviews			
Finalise assessors/stakeholders			
Book accommodation (with consideration of uncontrolled disturbances e.g. playground outside)			
Book refreshments			
Organise all equipment / required documents for all tasks and assessors			
Key Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template Marking Grid • Final Scoring Grid • Final Scoring Grid for all Candidates • Example Assessment Timetables • Example Interview Structure • Example Interview Marking Grid • Application forms of shortlisted candidates • Job description and Person specification • Completed Needs Analysis • Other relevant documentation for each task 			

Assessment Checklist – On the Day			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Ensure all relevant documentation received and copied and originals returned to the candidate			
Arrange for interview expenses to be paid if appropriate			
Continue to fill in Compliance Candidate Checklist			
Key Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final timetable • Exercise materials and any other equipment for tasks • Copies of interview questions • Making grids • Final Scoring Grid • Final Scoring Grid for all Candidates • Application forms of shortlisted candidates (now including personal information) • Job description and Person specification • Headship Interview Expenses Claim Forms • All relevant candidate documentation (collect and photocopy on the day) • Pre-employment Clearances Candidate Checklist 			

DECISION MAKING

If, for example, you have invited six candidates for assessment/interview, you may determine that only two of them are still potentially appointable.

Once the formal assessment process is completed, all members of the selection panel, supported by the LA adviser, will need to reconvene to reach a final decision.

Remember at this point to take in all the information received over the assessment process. You should ensure you have the following documentation for each candidate available:

- Completed application form
- All comments, scores and feedback from assessment exercises

You should also have the key competencies and Needs Analysis to hand, to remind you what it is you are looking for in a headteacher.

Be prepared NOT to appoint if none come up to the required standard. It is far better to start again rather than make a wrong appointment.

A full Governing body meeting must be convened to approve the decision of the selection panel of Governor before any offer of employment is made unconditional, preferably on the evening of day 2. It is advised that the Chair of Governors introduces the ratification of appointment as an agenda item and reminds the full governing body that authority for the appointment has been delegated to the selection panel and that it is a matter for the minutes to gain full ratification of the appointment – not to review the decision making process. Please note, if clearances are not completed in time for the Governing body decision, the offer should be made on a conditional basis.

Making a Decision

- The selection should be made on the basis of which individual best fits the criteria set at the start of the recruitment process. Using a robust and consistent scoring procedure as outlined in this guidance will allow you to do this
- The selection criteria used should be the key competencies outlined when you undertook the initial Needs Analysis. **It is not possible to adjust the selection criteria at this stage to allow you to choose the panel's preferred candidate, but it is not necessary to simply appoint the candidate with the highest score as long as you can objectively justify the reasons for your choice and prove discrimination did not occur.** You might do this by adding a heavier 'weighting' to more important competency areas. This weighting does however need to be proportionate and reasonable; speak to Resourcing Solutions for more information
- Remember it is not about the total score candidates receive but about what the numbers represent. If you are using the scoring system recommended in this guidance, then to be deemed appointable, candidates should score a minimum of 2 across the board, but ideally 3. However, there may be certain circumstances where candidates have perhaps scored well overall but received a '1' in a particular area. This may not be a problem as long as the required skills and knowledge can be developed within the first 3 months of commencing in post.

- Unless the school is voluntary-aided or a foundation school or academy, the Governing Body should inform the LA of the chosen candidate. Very rarely, the LA may not agree with the choice of candidate; for example if they fail to meet the legal or qualifications requirements or it is thought that their appointment would have a detrimental effect on the school. Where this is the case, the Governing Body will need to express the reasons for their decision in writing and be prepared for the decision to be challenged.

If you do appoint

Following ratification by the full Governing Body, both successful and unsuccessful candidates must be informed. Inform the successful candidate first as you may wish to offer the post to a suitable reserve candidate – as long as they also meet the criteria - should your first choice decline. It is usually the Chair of Governors who will call the candidate to make a conditional, verbal offer. The candidate should be made aware that at this stage the offer is conditional upon receiving satisfactory employment clearance, including an Enhanced DBS Disclosure, a NCTL teachers prohibited list check, health clearance and appropriate, satisfactory references including absence information and full governing body ratification. A conditional offer of employment can only be withdrawn if the person has not commenced work; therefore the successful candidate should not start working until all clearances are in place. Agree with the candidate a provisional start date, salary and when you will inform pupils, staff and parents. See the [template notification letter for successful and unsuccessful candidates](#)

You must also ask the successful candidate for permission to contact their named referees to ask health and absence related questions after the conditional offer is made (see the [Medical Reference Request Pro forma](#)). You must also ask the successful candidate to complete a [health-related questionnaire](#)

Unsuccessful candidates should be offered the opportunity to seek feedback.

DBS Disclosure

You will have verified the documents required for the DBS check during the interview day. The successful candidate will now need to complete the online DBS application, as detailed in the DBS Online Applicant's Guidance, unless they already have enhanced clearance with North Yorkshire County Council. This must be verified by sending an email to employmentsupportservice@northyorks.gov.uk. This should include the name of the candidate, their date of birth, their current school and the post they have applied for.

Photocopied documents relating to unsuccessful candidates must be destroyed straight away. Those for the person offered the post should be retained only until the DBS check is completed.

Setting up the Post

When the successful candidate accepts the offer and the pre-employment checks are completed you need to inform the Employment Support Services. You should complete all sections of the [Teacher new starter appointment form](#), and send it to Employment Support Services, accompanied by a copy of the successful candidate's application form. Employment Support Services will use the information on the appointment Form to generate the pay record for the new employee and issue the formal offer letter and statement of particulars. In Voluntary Aided Schools, however, the Governing Body should use Diocesan statements of particulars and issue these documents themselves. Schools with devolved input access to Resource link undertake all the above work themselves so are not required to complete and submit the appointment form.

If you do not appoint

If you are unable to appoint a new headteacher you will need to reflect upon where the campaign was not as effective as it might have been, and consider what changes you will need to make to the process when you repeat it.

The Governing Body will need to review whether the delay will require the appointment of an acting or interim headteacher.

Decision Making Checklist			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Agree successful candidate and ensure satisfactory references and proof of qualifications			
Offer post, confirm start date and salary			
Obtain health information and check this is satisfactory			
Arrange for candidate to complete online DBS check if valid check is not in place			
Receive verification of DBS check from employment support service via email			
Inform unsuccessful candidates			
Offer opportunity for feedback to successful and unsuccessful candidates			
Complete the appointment form			
Prepare and send contract			
Inform LA of the successful candidate			
Complete Compliance Candidate Checklist			
Key Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Marking Grids • Application forms of shortlisted candidates • Job description • Person specification • Completed Needs Analysis • Notification Letter for Successful Candidate • Notification Letter for Unsuccessful Candidate • Feedback for all candidates • Appointment Form • DBS documentation • Medical Reference Request Proforma • Compliance Candidate Checklist 			

Debrief and Review of the Recruitment Process

Upon completion of recruitment and selection process, you should take time to evaluate the process. If you did not appoint, this evaluation will allow you to analyse the process and identify where you might need to make changes and improve the process for when it is repeated. If you have successfully appointed, it is worth keeping a record of what worked well and why your experience was successful. Ensure all evaluation information is securely stored as a guide for future recruitment.

You should agree a definition of the criteria for success within the recruitment process. Things to consider in your evaluation:

- Did you carry out an accurate Needs Analysis?
- Was the advertising successful and cost-effective?
- Did you attract the required quantity and quality of candidates?
- Was the content of the Job Description and Person Specification useful in the shortlisting and selection processes?
- Were your shortlisting and assessment processes rigorous, thorough, consistent and fair?
- Did the assessment days run smoothly?
- Were you able to gain enough information about each candidate to confidently assess their suitability for the post?
- Did your administration processes run smoothly?
- Did you enhance the image of the school through the process – did candidates feel valued?
- Did you meet all necessary legal and equal opportunities requirements?
- Were the pupils, staff and parents communicated with enough on/during the process?

It is also good practice to seek feedback from candidates and other stakeholders e.g. LA adviser, Resourcing Solutions adviser.

If you have recruited, you should also continue to evaluate and monitor the success and suitability of the new headteacher once in post, including how long they remain with the school.

Induction of the New Headteacher

The recruitment process does not finish on appointment of the successful candidate. The Governing Body also has the responsibility of ensuring a robust and successful induction for the new headteacher is in place. A well-planned period of induction is the final stage of a successful recruitment process and will enable your new headteacher to get up to speed as quickly as possible, and ultimately be high performing as soon as possible. Invaluable information on the candidate will have been gained during the assessment process and this should be fed into the creation of a **personal development plan**. In this way Governors can ensure that the induction provided is appropriately focussed.

The induction of your new headteacher should not be left to chance. If this is their first headship, you should ensure they access Professional Development for school leaders_.

When you appoint someone to their first headship, it is worth remembering that for them the transition to headship is as significant as a teacher moving from training into their first teaching post. The challenges they face will be enormous, however good the school, and new headteachers will not know what they don't know! The Chair of Governors can help by arranging the following:

- Opportunities for the new headteacher to visit the school and meet with the outgoing headteacher and appropriate members of staff between appointment and take up of post. Be prepared to finance this by paying release costs to the new headteacher's current school
- The new headteacher's involvement in any appointments of new staff made between appointment and take up of post
- A meeting for the new headteacher and Chair of Governors within a week of take up of post, to ensure a personal development plan is in place, based on feedback from the assessment process
- Ensuring that the outgoing headteacher and Governors provide key information. This is especially critical in small primary schools where the headteacher will often be the sole holder of some key information (see the [New Starter checklist](#) for more information). You should also provide the new headteacher with key documents for them to read before commencing in post. This will bring them more 'up to speed' with the school prior to their start date
- After take up of post, arrange regular meetings with the Chair of Governors, who should take time to listen to the new headteacher's views and concerns and give constructive advice to ensure Governing Body meetings run smoothly. A good rapport between the Chair of Governors and headteacher is important and this is best achieved by clarity over boundaries of responsibility
- Support for the new headteacher with drawing up Governing Body meeting agendas
- The first cycle of performance management is closely linked to headteacher induction, with objectives set accordingly

Other elements of the induction process include administrative matters and providing the new headteacher with policies and procedures adopted by the school (or the link for them to access them electronically) such as:

- Health and safety
- Smoking policy
- Disciplinary and other HR procedures
- Data protection

Information on these policies is available on the [School Staff Information Site](#)

Support from the Local Authority

Following the appointment of new headteachers, the LA provides a range of support to ensure their professional development, confirm their assessment of the school's priorities and provide personal and professional day-to-day support. Key elements include:

- **Health Check Review** - the School Improvement Service will arrange for a one-day review of the school to take place in the headteacher's first half term. This will support the headteacher's assessment of the school and provide an external benchmark for future developments. The School's designated Human Resources Advisor will also conduct a 'New Headteacher Visit' during the first term in post, and run through a checklist of items the headteacher should be familiar with, as well as covering any relevant HR related casework
- **Mentor** - it will be arranged for an existing North Yorkshire headteacher to provide confidential personal and professional support to the new headteacher
- **Induction programme** - the LA provides all new headteachers with a bespoke induction programme, covering areas such as Finance, Human Resources and Governance

Getting Started Checklist			
Task	Lead	Date Completed	Comments
Arrange meeting for new headteacher, Chair of Governors and LA adviser to discuss assessment feedback			
Use feedback from assessment process to shape Personal Development Plan			
Plan induction of new headteacher			
Undertake review of recruitment process			
Ensure new headteacher has access to relevant key documentation prior to starting in post			
Key Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback for successful candidate • New Starter checklist • Personal Development Plan 			

Appendix 1

SAFER RECRUITMENT SHORTLISTED CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

Shortlisted Candidate Name/Ref No		Y/N	Notes/Actions Required	By whom and by when
Application form information/additional information provided by the candidate	Is the application form fully completed?			
	Is there any information from the candidate which gives cause for concern? Are there any gaps in employment history? Any concerns re reason for leaving? etc.			
	Issues to be followed up at interview identified?			
Reference requests	Are referees suitable persons? Is one of the referees current employer? Is one referee from last employment working with children and young people? Does the candidate need to be approached to request different/additional references?			
	Requested prior to interview?(only if permission granted by the applicant and only a partial reference should be requested prior to interview)			
	Sent to place of work, not home address?			
	Reference proforma seeks all relevant information re suitability to work with children and young people, asks about any previous concerns and relates to job description and person specification which are enclosed with request			
Reference information	Have at least two suitable references been received?			
	Are the references fully completed and all information requested included?			

	Is there any information from referees which gives cause for concern? Could this be a compromise/settlement agreement reference?			
	Are applicant's and referees' information consistent?			
	Issues to be followed up at interview identified?			
Pre-Interview consideration	Should the interview go ahead?			
Interview	Questions re suitability to work with and safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people asked and followed up with supplementary questions where necessary			
	Additional questions asked and followed up with supplementary questions where necessary			
	Candidate reminded that appointment is subject to satisfactory Enhanced DBS, barred list check and references, and asked if there is anything they wish to declare			
	Documents relating to Identity, Change of name D.O.B and qualifications seen, scrutinised and photocopied			
	Is there any information/concern which suggests that the candidate should be reported to police/ DBS /Regulatory body?			
	Is there any information which suggests that the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children or young people and should not be offered the post?			
	Is all of the information consistent? Is there any information/concern which needs to be followed up further?			
Offer of appointment	If the candidate to be offered the post:			
	All pre appointment checks and at least 2 suitable references are received and satisfactory. If partial reference has been obtained prior to interview, ensure the second part of the reference is completed. Risk			

	assessment undertaken and recorded where any cause for concern.			
	<p>Candidate not permitted to start work until all checks completed.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances a candidate may begin work prior to receipt of checks and references only in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken and risk control measures have been put in place e.g. no unsupervised access to children. It is made clear that should the checks be unsatisfactory that employment offer will be withdrawn.</p>			
	Was the medical questionnaire completed? Were there any concerns that might affect the individual's ability to fulfil the full range of duties? Are any reasonable adjustments required?			