

Your Application, Our Recruitment Process & Conditions and Benefits of Employment

Applying for a job

Torfaen County Borough Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and Recruitment and Selection code of practice means that we want to ensure that every applicant is treated fairly.

Making an Application

The application form is the only information used when deciding who to select for the next stage of the recruitment process. It is important that you take the opportunity to complete your form as fully and concisely as possible based on the information we have given you about the job.

It is sometimes difficult to determine from the application form how well an applicant meets the criteria which have been identified for successful performance in the job. To make this a more objective process and to assist us in shortlisting it would be helpful if you could bear in mind the following suggestions when completing the application form: -

- the application form is available at www.torfaen.gov.uk for you to either download and e-mail to recruitment@torfaen.gov.uk or to complete and post. It is your responsibility to ensure that the application has been received by us. We suggest you use a read-receipt option if you e-mail the form and contact us urgently if you do not receive a receipt notification after requesting one;
- your application needs to show the relevant skills, interests and experience you have gained;
- give examples of the work you have been involved in and write in a positive way (for example: I was responsible for..... I organised.....). be sure you specify your own responsibilities and not those of your department; and
- each vacancy we advertise is based on a person specification which describes the skills, experience and aptitudes we are looking for. Wherever possible relate your own skills and experiences back to the requirements.

You should remember to relate your application to a specific job. Every job is different – only submit the same application for a series of jobs if it is appropriate. Do not submit CVs with your application form or make an application using a CV only.

Complete your form and submit before the closing date to **the address detailed on the Job Advert**. Late applications may not be considered.

Should you not hear from us within four weeks of the closing date, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

Recruitment information is available in Welsh

Shortlisting and Assessment

Applicants who meet the essential requirements of the person specification would normally be shortlisted for interview. You may be contacted by telephone or letter if you have been shortlisted. In addition, the Council may conduct tests/written exercises and/or assessment centres in appropriate circumstances and you may be asked to undertake such exercises as part of the recruitment process. You will be notified of the format of the selection process when you are contacted to confirm you have been shortlisted.

At the interview the Panel will ask questions which are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the post. This is also your opportunity to ask questions relating to the job, terms and conditions, hours of work, etc.

Positive About Disabled People

The disability confident symbol demonstrates that Torfaen County Borough Council is committed to the employment, retention, training and career development of people with a disability. Under this scheme if you have a disability and your application meets the essential criteria for the post you have applied for you will be shortlisted. If you wish your application to be considered under this scheme please complete Section 18 of the application form.

If you require assistance to complete the application form please contact us.



Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces Veterans

Helping veterans fulfil their potential outside the Armed Forces

TCBC has introduced a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for armed forces veterans. The scheme supports the pledges in the Community Covenant.

Veterans can find making the transition to civilian life extremely challenging, particularly in finding and securing lasting employment.

The specific aims of the scheme are to:

- assist veterans in overcoming barriers to finding civilian employment
- reduce the risk of veterans having health and welfare problems as a result of long term unemployment
- redress the balance for veterans' re-employment prospects by giving them the chance to improve their transition back into civilian life
- complement the re-employment support provided to veterans leaving the armed forces by the Ministry of Defence
- benefit from the transferrable skills and qualities of veterans

When a veteran applies for a job, they will be able to indicate on the application form their veteran status. A guaranteed interview will be offered to veterans, provided that the veteran:

- is currently serving in the armed forces and is within 12 weeks of their discharge date OR the armed forces were the veterans' last long term employer
- meets the essential criteria for an advertised role

These criteria will be applied so as to create a longer shortlist of candidates than might otherwise arise. No candidate will be displaced from a shortlist by the application of the scheme.

The scheme is not a guaranteed job for veterans. Selection procedures will still ensure the best candidate for the job is appointed, based on objective criteria in the role profile.



Reasonable Adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to job roles to facilitate the employment of applicants and employees with disabilities.

Fair Recruitment

Torfaen County Borough Council puts great importance on ensuring that every stage of the recruitment process is carried out fairly and consistently.

Equal Opportunities Commitment Statement

Torfaen County Borough Council is committed to achieving equality as an employer and in all aspects of our business. The Council will ensure that the community we serve and current and potential members of staff have equality of opportunity to access all our services and opportunities. The Council will seek to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, race, language, gender, colour, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, social position, or any other improper grounds, by any requirements or regulations which cannot be fully and legally justified.

If you want to discuss why you have not been successful, or not been shortlisted please contact the Manager who interviewed you who will be able to give you verbal feedback.

If you remain dissatisfied you should write to the Head of Strategic Human Resources, giving details of the post you have applied for and we will ensure that the matter is properly investigated. If your complaint is found to be valid, we will review, as appropriate, our recruitment procedures.

We look forward to receiving your application. If you are not successful, please do not be discouraged from re-applying for a different vacancy.

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Main Conditions of Employment

This post is subject to the conditions prescribed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services except where varied by local agreements.

Salaries

Please refer to the Council's internet site for the current salary information and pay structure. The grade of the post you have applied for will be shown on the job description.

Probation

If you are a new entrant to Local Government Service, or have had a break from continuous Local Government employment, your appointment is subject to a satisfactory probationary period of a minimum of six months from the commencement of your employment. During your probationary period you will be expected to establish your suitability for the post, failure to do so could result in your probationary period being

extended or your employment being terminated on grounds of unsatisfactory probationary period.

Leave

All new entrants to Local Government are entitled to annual leave in proportion to the completed full months of service in the leave year. Part time employees have an equal annual leave entitlement in proportion to the number of hours worked. Annual leave is dependent on length of service as follows:

Basic entitlement	After 5 years continuous local government service	After 10 years continuous local government service	Bank Holiday Entitlement
23	28	31	11
22 (where Christmas shutdown does not apply)	27 (where Christmas shutdown does not apply)	30 (where Christmas shutdown does not apply)	12 (where Christmas shutdown does not apply)

Sickness

The entitlement to sick pay depends on length of service as follows:

Length of Service	Months full pay	Months half pay
During 1st year of service	1	2 (after 4 months service)
During 2nd year of service	2	2
During 3rd year of service	4	4
During 4th and 5th years of service	5	5
After 5th year of service	6	6

Car Allowances

Where an employee is required by the Council to use a private car on official business they will be entitled to a reimbursement of mileage incurred.

Where an employee is unable to use personal transport reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate alternative travel arrangements.

Working Arrangements

The normal working week is 37 hours, Monday to Friday. The hours of work will be confirmed at interview. Where posts are advertised on a rota basis or are not based on the normal 37 hours, information will be included in the application pack or details will be included in the advertisement.

The actual days and hours of working are arranged by the section where the post is located depending on the requirements of the directorate or unit. You may be required to work unsocial hours and/or on a rota system. For most office based posts Torfaen County Borough Council promotes flexible working hours. Further details of the working arrangements for this post will be discussed if you are invited to attend an interview.

Employee Benefits

Pension Scheme

Under pension regulations you will be automatically included in a pension scheme. It will be the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). If you do not wish to remain in a pension scheme you will need to contact the LGPS via email on pensions@torfaen.gov.uk or telephone 01495 766266. For further information please visit the Council's website at: www.torfaen.gov.uk/LocalGovernmentPensionScheme

Employee Support Line

Torfaen County Borough Council offers a self-referral staff counselling service, which provides confidential help and support for work-related and personal difficulties.

Gateway Credit Union

Credit Unions are financial co-operatives run by and for their members, who are all local people. Members who save with them create a pool of money which is lent to those who want to borrow. The interest paid on loans pays for the running of the Credit Union. Credit Unions are ethical and offer fair, clear terms and low interest rates to all members. Credit Unions help people to manage their money and offer help with debt and money problems.

Childcare Vouchers

As an employer we share your concerns about balancing your working life with the demands made on you as a parent. With this in mind and to enhance our family friendly employment policies we operate a childcare voucher scheme.

The scheme operates on a salary sacrifice basis, which means you exchange part of your salary for vouchers to use for childcare. You will not be required to pay tax and national insurance contributions on the total voucher value each month.

Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Information for Applicants

As an equal opportunities employer Torfaen County Borough Council actively seeks to provide equal opportunity and access to all. Whilst the Council has put into place procedures to avoid discrimination in its recruitment processes it must at the same time also ensure that the people we employ have a legal right to work in the UK.

This is why before any offer of employment can be made we must see proof that you are able to work in the UK.

To find out whether you have the right to work in the UK you can visit the UK Border Agency website for further information. www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk (new window) or contact the HR Division for further advice.

If you do not have the right to work in the UK without restriction, the HR Section will be able to advise you of the likelihood of obtaining a Work Permit for the post for which you wish to be considered.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 **Treatment of Ex-Offenders**

Introduction

At Torfaen County Borough Council we aim to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a diversity of candidates. Criminal records will only be taken into account for recruitment purposes when they are relevant to the post for which you are applying. Otherwise, consideration for employment will be on merit and ability.

Details of Criminal Records

If the post you are applying for requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check you are required to complete section 13 of the application form. If you have a conviction whether spent or unspent you are required to declare that fact in this section however please note that the DBS remove old and minor offences from the criminal record certificates. For those over 18 at the time of the offence the adult conviction will be removed if 11 years have elapsed since the date of the conviction and it was the only offence and it did not result in a custodial sentence. An adult caution will be removed after 6 years have elapsed since the date of the caution. For those under 18 at the time of the offence the same rules apply except the elapsed time period is 5 ½ years for a conviction and 2 years for a caution. Any old, minor offences meeting the above criterion would not have to be declared.

Spent Criminal Convictions

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 sets out to help people who have been convicted of a criminal offence and who have since lived on the right side of the law. In general, a person convicted of a criminal offence and who receives a sentence of no more than two and half years in prison, benefits from the Act if they are not convicted again during a specified period. This period is called the rehabilitation period.

In general terms, the more severe a penalty is, the longer the rehabilitation period. Once a rehabilitation period has expired and no further offending has taken place, a conviction is considered to be 'spent'. Once a conviction has been spent, the convicted person does not have to reveal or admit its existence in most circumstances, including, for example, when applying for a job.

However, there are jobs for which all convictions must be declared on the application form.

What is an 'unspent' conviction?

If you've ever been convicted of an offence for which a **sentence of more than 2 and a half years** was imposed (*regardless of the amount of time you actually spent in prison*) this conviction can never become 'spent': It's an 'unspent' conviction which you must disclose when asked about your criminal convictions (*such as when applying for a job*).

Is this the only time a conviction is 'unspent'?

No. If you were given a sentence of two and half years or less, a conviction may still be unspent. Whether or not depends on the length of time that's elapsed since the date of the conviction. This time is called the **rehabilitation period** –and it differs according to the type of sentence passed.

Rehabilitation Periods

The following sentences are deemed as never being 'spent' and **must** be declared regardless of what type of job you are applying for:

- ◆ imprisonment for life;

- ◆ imprisonment, youth custody, detention in a young offenders institution, or corrective training for a term exceeding 30 months;
- ◆ preventive detention;
- ◆ detention during Her Majesty's pleasure or for life under s.205(2) or (3) of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975, or for a term exceeding 30 months passed under s.53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (young offenders convicted of grave crimes), or under the Act of 1975 (detention of children convicted on indictment), or a corresponding court martial punishment;
- ◆ custody for life.

Cautions, reprimands and formal warnings are considered 'spent' immediately they are given. However, for the posts requiring a criminal record disclosure, spent convictions are required to be disclosed unless they meet the DBS old and minor criterion which are removed from the certificate, the definition is given below:-

For those over 18 at the time of the offence the adult conviction will be removed if 11 years have elapsed since the date of the conviction and it was the only offence and it did not result in a custodial sentence. An adult conviction will be removed after 6 years have elapsed since the date of the caution. For those under 18 at the time of the offence the same rules apply except the elapsed time period is 5 ½ years for a conviction and 2 years for a caution

Having an 'unspent' conviction will not necessarily bar an applicant from employment, this will depend on the circumstances and nature of the offence (s).

The Following List includes sentences which are subject to rehabilitation under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act:

Types of sentence imposed on adults aged 18 years and over at the time	Number of Years (from date of conviction) Before conviction Becomes "Spent"
Imprisonment or detention in a young offender institution (previously known as youth custody) between six months and two and a half years	10 years
Imprisonment or detention in a young offender institution (previously known as youth custody) for six months or less	7 years
A fine or any other sentence for which a different rehabilitation period is not provided (eg, a compensation or community service order, or a probation order received on or after 3 rd February 1995)	5 years
An absolute discharge	6 months

Except an absolute discharge, all periods above are **halved** if the person convicted was **under 18** at the time. If you were under 18 and received a probation order on or after 3 February 1995 the rehabilitation period is two and a half years or until the order expires –

whichever is the longer. In the past, there were sentences that could be imposed **only on young people**. The rehabilitation periods for sentences like this are as follows:

Type of Sentence imposed on Young People aged Under 18 years at the time	Number of Years (from date of conviction) Before Conviction Become "Spent"
Borstal	7 years
Detention Centre	3 years
An order for custody in a Remand Home or an Approved School Order	1 year after the order expires

Some sentences like this carry **variable rehabilitation periods**:

Type of Sentence imposed on Young People aged Under 18 years at the time	Number of Years (from date of conviction) Before Conviction Become "Spent"
A probation order received before 3 rd February 1995, a conditional discharge or a bind over	1 year or until the order expires (whichever is the longer)
A care order or supervision order	1 year, or until the order expires (whichever is the longer)
An Attendance Centre order	1 year after the order expires
A Hospital Order (with or without a restriction order)	5 years, or two and a half years after the order expires (whichever is longer)

Assessing the relevance of criminal records

In assessing a candidate's (with a criminal record) suitability for employment, depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions, the Council will take into account their skills, experience and conviction circumstances and weigh it against the element of risk for the job.

Whilst it may not be possible to carry out a complete assessment on each individual, the Council will ensure that the circumstances of the offence are taken into account when assessing the suitability of an applicant with a criminal record for a vacancy. The assessment will not be taken prior to a job offer being made.

Criminal Disclosure Checks

In addition to you volunteering any information, all appointments to the above posts are subject to a criminal disclosure check, and appointment will only be made upon receipt of a satisfactory disclosure. The DBS disclosure will detail cautions, reprimands and formal warnings, as well as convictions. Other relevant non conviction information may be disclosed by the relevant authorities on your DBS check.

This will also check ISA Children and Vulnerable Adults List where requested.

Treatment of Ex-Offenders

In order to ensure the proper use of disclosure information the council has a policy on the recruitment and treatment of ex-offenders. A full copy is available on request from HR Division, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB.