



### Recruitment Guidance during school closure periods

Whilst the nationwide closure of educational establishments, along with strict social distancing measures is having a significant impact on day to day operations across the Trust, there is still a need to ensure that each Academy has the right people resources it needs to deliver its objectives. The first half of the summer term is an important time in terms of recruitment of teaching staff for the following academic year and the current situation does not alter that.

However, it does present a challenge for Academies in ensuring that they are able to appoint the best candidate for a role, whilst ensuring that any potentially unfair or unlawful discriminatory practices are eliminated. There are also implications in respect of timeframes for teachers resigning their posts in order to take up new roles in the autumn term.

A joint statement from the Local Government Association, National Governance Association and the Teaching Trade Unions (released 31.03.2020) acknowledges that disruption to recruitment and resignation processes is 'likely', particularly where there is a requirement for teachers to provide written notice by 31 May (30 April for Headteachers) of their intention to resign on 31 August.

There are no plans to change these dates although a 'flexible' response to resignations submitted outside of normal timeframes is encouraged, within reasonable parameters.

Government advice remains 'stay at home', and the joint guidance is clear in that schools should not be conducting face to face interviews or encouraging applicants to visit schools during this period.

This means that 'normal' recruitment processes, particularly in cases where classroom observation is required, cannot be followed at this time. Therefore, Heads should determine whether their recruitment needs are essential in the current climate and if they can be delayed, they should be. In coming to this decision, the following points should be considered:

- Can the vacancy be covered in the short term by an internal appointment, supply cover or some other means?
- Assess the risks of proceeding with an adapted process in the context of the candidate pool potentially being limited, the implications on the ability to undertake a robust and meaningful assessment of candidates and if any adapted processes are compliant with safeguarding and equality legislation.
- Heads should also bear in mind that proceeding with their own recruitment at this time will present similar challenges for other schools. Further guidance is being sought from the DfE in order to support schools in ensuring that there is not a deficit of teachers and/ or leaders who have been unable to move around within the education system ahead of a September start.
- The key question at this time should be 'is no appointment better than a potentially poor appointment?'

*\* any planned recruitment should be discussed at CET*

If, following the steps outlined above, it is determined that recruitment is essential, the following factors should be taken into consideration at each stage of the recruitment process:

- Shortlisting - this is vital in ensuring that an applicant meets the requirements of the role as set out in the person specification. Each member of the selection panel should make their assessment independently of other members before reaching a collective judgement. There should be no issues in undertaking this process remotely.
- Selection methods – the panel need to determine how each criterion in the person specification will be most appropriately assessed. Individual panel interview is the most common method although assessment centres, group exercise, presentations and job-related tests are also common. The current situation will mean that some of these methods (assessment centres, group discussions) will not be appropriate, although interviews, presentations and testing could still take place.

However, the requirement for a teacher to be observed teaching a lesson will not be able to be undertaken and therefore alternatives will need to be considered such as looking at this area in more detail in any presentation/interview, including the production of lesson plans, in depth presentation of how a lesson would be taught, increased emphasis on previous experience and asking for references detailing specific teaching experience.

- The Assessments – Testing can reasonably be undertaken possibly via existing online platforms at the school's disposal and presentations could be recorded and sent to the panel ahead of any 'live' interview. In relation to the interview, consideration will need to be given how and when this will take place as well as the individual circumstances of the applicant (or panel members).

Whilst online platforms such as Zoom are available, if participants are undertaking the process within their homes then they will need to ensure that the appropriate technology, internet access and 'space' is in place. Whilst the onus should be on the applicant to ensure that they are able to undertake the interview in a quiet space without distraction this may not be possible within the confines of the 'stay at home' guidance. Therefore, this should be considered sensitively and reasonable adjustments may need to be made in respect of disabled applicants. Furthermore, should restrictions on movement be lifted, and schools re-open, there may still be some form of isolation requirement for those who fall within the 'high risk' group. Therefore, it may still be necessary to interview remotely for these applicants.

Guidance will continue to be reviewed, updated and distributed to Heads.