

Your Application and our Recruitment Process

Your application form is very important - the information you provide in your application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be shortlisted for the selection process. The information listed here will provide guidelines on how to complete your application.

Lewisham Council's Equality and Diversity Policy means that we want to ensure that every applicant is treated fairly. This means that we are not able to consider previous applications or personal knowledge of you.

Making an application

Every vacancy advertised is based on a **person specification** which describes the skills, experience and abilities we are looking for. Please look at this carefully so that you know what the job involves and what is required. Ask yourself why you are interested in the job and how you meet our requirements. Your supporting statement must address how you meet all requirements listed in the person specification at shortlisting stage (marked 'S' on the person specification). Your supporting statement 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. Always remember to write about your individual responsibilities, e.g. 'I was responsible for...'; 'I introduced...'. Always gear your application to the specific job and ensure it is relevant to the person specification.

If you are completing the online application form, it will be automatically e-mailed back to us on completion. You will receive notification that your form has been received.

If you are handwriting your form please complete your form in black ink or type it and forward it before the closing date to the address at the top of the application form. Always keep a copy for your reference.

Shortlisting and interviews

If you are successful at shortlisting stage, you will be invited to an interview. At the interview, the panel will ask questions which are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to demonstrate the extent to which you meet the requirements of the post. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the job and conditions of service.



As part of the recruitment and selection process you may be asked to complete written or online tests and assessments. Details of the tests will be provided to you before you attend your interview.

Applicants with a disability

If you have a disability and are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please tell us about this in your application. If you meet all other criteria, you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements. This could include adjustment to premises and equipment or job duties.

If you are offered a job, this will be subject to a number of clearances such as satisfactory medical and references; eligibility to work in the UK; CRB check if the job involves working with children or vulnerable adults; proof of qualifications; amongst others.

Fair recruitment

We try to ensure that every stage in our recruitment process is fair, properly carried out and that people aren't discriminated against. If you are not successful at either the shortlisting or the interview stage of the process and would like to know the reasons why, you should contact the RPAU in the first instance and they will be able to refer you on to the relevant manager to discuss this. If you have worked for Lewisham Council before but had to retire early due to ill health or were made redundant, you will not usually be re-employed for a period of 2 years after you left.

Employees enjoy a range of excellent benefits which are generous in many areas compared with other sectors. These apply to everyone whether temporary or permanent. A few differences still exist amongst different employee groups but these are being phased out as part of the move towards a 'single status' workforce.

Location

Lewisham is an up-and-coming place with something for everyone. It stretches from the River Thames in the north down to Crystal Palace and Beckenham Place parks in the south. More and more people are choosing to live and work in Lewisham, thanks to the unique mix of urban cultural life and suburban



tranquility. The area offers as much peace and quiet or hustle and bustle as you require. It all depends where you look. For much-needed chill out time, there are award winning parks and open spaces to explore.

The Laban Dance Centre, Horniman Museum and Broadway Theatre offer a culture fix. On the other hand, if you're looking to let off steam, then there are plenty of bars, restaurants and cafes. Lewisham is one of London's best-connected areas offering frequent trains to and from Waterloo East, London Bridge, Charing Cross, Blackfriars, Victoria and Cannon Street.

The East London line connects New Cross to Surrey Quays and Whitechapel, while the Docklands Light Railway connects travellers to Canary Wharf, Tower Hill, Bank and the London Tube network. Eurostar trains to France and Belgium are available from Waterloo International offering an escape to the continent within two hours.

Why work for us

If you want to affect real change and help build something truly special then Lewisham is the place to be. We are a Council that values people who are adaptable, innovative and seek to make a positive change. You can choose from hundreds of occupations from lawyer to nursery worker, occupational therapist to street warden. No matter where you start within the Council, you'll be given the tools you need to build a promising career.

Nick Johnson: National Management Trainee - "One thing that surprised me was how involved the Council is in the regeneration process, and in improving the borough for everyone living and working here. I live in Deptford and there's a feel good factor about the place. The more I get to know Lewisham, the more I like it."

Terry Lynsdale: Manager – Jobnet / Opening Doors - "We work closely with employers throughout Lewisham and keep a close eye on the vacancies they have. When we're satisfied that we've found the right job for a particular person we put them forward and they take it from there."

In the long term, Terry's team is helping to regenerate Lewisham, by getting people to return to work and to support the local economy.

Career progression

Lewisham council is dedicated to continuous improvement, including the development of employees. We are a Council that values people who are adaptable, innovative and seek to make a positive change. Hard work will be rewarded with genuine chances for career progression and some of the best training opportunities around.



Aodan O'Connell: Project Officer E-Gov - 'Lewisham is leading the way in local government when it comes to getting the borough online. For people living here it means better access to new services, and that's a real positive. We have to bridge the gap between cutting-edge technology and the end user, because it doesn't make sense introducing technology that people can't use.'

Nadine Anderson: Learning and Development Commissioning Manager - 'The Council recognise that to improve services, every member of staff needs the chance to fulfil his or her potential. My job is to identify the areas in which people need to progress, at which point I ensure that the right training is made available. It could be anything, from IT to presentation skills; the great thing about it is the variety. I'm involved in every area of what Lewisham does.'

Work-life balance

The council believe that time away from work is just as important as the hours you spend serving the community. This is why we try to be as flexible as possible in giving you the work-life balance you need to enjoy your time in the borough.

Housing is more affordable here than in most areas in London, and when you add this to the generous holiday entitlement and the final salary pension scheme we offer, you can see why so many people are choosing to work with us.

Lorna Thomas: Drug Strategy Team – 'The main reason why I joined Lewisham was because of the quality of life on offer here. I live 15 minutes from work and this gives me more time to spend with my son. I did the long hours in the city and I just wanted something different.'

Reuben Lodge: Intake Team – As a local resident, Reuben enjoys the convenience of working nearby. 'You want to improve your own quality of life, and that's why I chose Lewisham in the first place. I know the area, and it's easy for me to get back home after work to pursue other interests.'

Benefits

Salary and allowances – are detailed in the job advert (a copy of which is in this pack) and also on our website www.lewisham.gov.uk/jobs. Increments within each salary scale are paid from 1st April in any year to employees whose start date falls between 1st April and 1st October.

Final salary pension scheme - All employees may join the Local Government Pension Scheme which is regarded as one of most generous currently available. Employees contribute at the rate of 6% of gross salary and full tax relief is automatically given; employers contribute 17.75%. The scheme provides excellent benefits in the form of an index linked retirement pension and tax-free lump sum based on final year's salary, together with ill-health, redundancy and death benefits. Pension contributions can be transferred to or from Lewisham's Scheme provided Inland Revenue requirements are met. The Scheme is contracted out of the Government State Earnings Related Scheme (SERPS).



Annual leave - Generous annual leave (in addition to statutory and public holidays) from 23 days to 34 days depending on length of service

Leave for part-time and job share employees is calculated on a pro-rata basis according to the hours worked.

Flexible working - The Council positively encourages flexible working and work life balance aimed at supporting individual employee requirements within the context of meeting service delivery needs. A range of schemes are in place including flexitime, part time work, term time work, career breaks, homeworking and jobsharing.

Occupational sick pay – ranges from 1 month's full pay, during 1st year of service to 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay after 5 years service

Family friendly policies - the Council offers excellent maternity benefits with up to 26 weeks paid leave after 1 year in post and 1 year's unpaid leave after the birth of the child; 10 days paid paternity leave; adoption leave and a subsidised workplace nursery, as well as childcare vouchers
Special leave is also available to deal with family emergencies.

Interest free employee loans - employees can take advantage of interest free season ticket, computer and bicycle loans

Childcare Vouchers - All working parents with children aged under 16, are eligible for Childcare Vouchers. Tax efficient savings of up to £1196 per parent, per child (*as at August 07*) are available to eligible Council staff.

Employee credit union - 'Crownsavers' is a credit union which offers easy ways to save via payroll deduction and borrowing facilities at interest rates below those of commercial banks.

Learning and development - The Council believes in "lifelong learning" and is committed to develop the potential of all its employees, not only for their current jobs, but also for their future employability.

Training in Lewisham not only means short courses or qualification training. It also includes workshops and seminars, job shadowing, mentoring, secondments and coaching. All employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to share their learning, and help to create opportunities for others to learn.



Membership of a trade union/employee groups - The Council, as a good employer, supports the system of collective bargaining and believes in the principle of solving employee relations issues by discussion and consultation. All employees have the right to join a Trade Union and take part in its activities as well as the employee groups such as the Black Staff Forum and the Disabled Workers Forum

Smoke-free working environment - Smoking is not permitted in Council buildings.

Conditions

Notice - the minimum period of notice depends on grade. It ranges from one to three months

Probation - confirmation of appointment is subject to a satisfactory probation period of 6 months

Retirements – although Council policy currently is that all employees must retire by the age of 65, employees may request to work up to the age of 70 subject to service delivery needs and continued satisfactory performance and medical fitness.

Code of conduct - all employees are subject to the Council's Code of Conduct which outlines the responsibilities of all employees in this area.

Health and safety policy - the Council aims to ensure a safe working environment for all its employees through the implementation and monitoring of its health and safety policy, providing training and guidance of safe working practices where appropriate.

Council policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders

Lewisham Council is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience against the job requirements

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the London Borough of Lewisham complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice (a copy of which can be



seen on the CRB website using the link http://www.crb.gov.uk/PDF/code_of_practice.pdf) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person who is the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all recruitment packs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, successful applicants will be required to complete a CRB form and provide evidence of identity to the satisfaction of the Council. Access to disclosure of criminal convictions will be restricted to those officers nominated for this purpose. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences. In reaching decisions about suitability for appointment, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- Whether the application has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters, and
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Information contained in Disclosures will not be shared with any other person(s) or bodies other than those provided for under the CRB Code of Practice.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

This Act formally recognises the principle that people who have been convicted of an offence should not as a result be discriminated against for the rest of their lives.



It puts this principle into practice by setting time periods after which particular convictions are “spent”, and do not have to be disclosed by the individual. Information on “spent” convictions can be obtained using the following link: <http://publish.lawontheweb.co.uk/rehabact.htm>.

However, the provisions about spent convictions do not apply to a large number of occupations. In general terms, these exemptions cover posts involving work with children or vulnerable adults, as well as other sensitive work. For further information please contact the Recruitment & Personnel Administration Unit on 0208 314 46656.

'Creating an inclusive Lewisham'

A core value of Lewisham Council is to *'draw on the diversity of our communities to create a more inclusive Lewisham'*. We believe that freedom from discrimination and equality of opportunity are fundamental rights and that each person should be valued regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. Social inclusion lies at the heart of everything we do as a Council in our roles as an employer, a provider of services and a community leader.

We will develop and promote policies, services and actions that will contribute to making a real difference

We will:

- Develop and provide services for all according to need without prejudice or bias
- Work in partnership with all sections of the community
- Celebrate the variety of lifestyles and cultures within our borough
- Monitor and review our policies and procedures using an equalities perspective supported by equalities impact assessments
- Employ a workforce that represents the makeup of the borough's population
- Provide an accessible and safe working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each individual
- Provide clear, meaningful information about Council services in formats and styles which best meet people's needs
- Work with others to provide an environment free from harassment and violence
- Find ways to involve all parts of the community in our decision-making processes

