

Guidance Notes

Please read these notes carefully before completing your Application Form.

This is important as it provides the only information we use to assess your suitability for the job and to decide whether or not to progress your application.

General points

- Be sure to fill in the post title and location of post; this information is vital to ensure that you will be considered for the right post.
- If you have a disability and need any help in completing the form please contact us.
- If you use extra pages as part of your application please put your name on each page.



Guidance Notes



General Tips on applying for a job with Housing21.

You should study the job description and person specification carefully before completing your application form. Ensure that you are clear about what you are being asked to do.

Make sure that your application is specific to the job you are applying for. A standard CV, which you have prepared before, may not address all of the items in the person specification.

The following tips are designed to help you complete the application form as effectively as possible:

Relationship with Housing 21 staff, Board of Management, Regional Committees, Tenants or Clients

We aim to ensure that neither our staff nor our service users are placed in a difficult position.

Therefore you must give details of any known relationship in accordance with the regulations we have to abide by.

Employment history

- The form asks you to give details of previous jobs held, and account for any gaps in your employment record. This information helps us to understand your record more clearly and we select regardless of any age related factors emerging from your employment history.
- Some people will have developed relevant skills through part-time or voluntary work. If you include any voluntary work, list the name and address of the group(s) involved.

Professional qualifications, relevant courses and/or any other information

- Please use this section to supplement the supporting information.

Supporting Information

- This section gives you the opportunity to demonstrate why you are suitable for the post. Before completing it, refer to the job description and person specification for the job.
- The job description outlines the main duties of the post and the person specification contains a description of the requirements necessary to carry out these tasks. Whether you are shortlisted for interview will depend on how well you can demonstrate that you meet the criteria listed in the person specification.
- You need to demonstrate your suitability for the job using the headings qualifications/experience, skills/abilities and knowledge outlining clearly how you meet the criteria.
- Use examples from your experience to demonstrate you have the required skills, knowledge and experience. You can use examples of your experience and knowledge gained from your current and previous employment, voluntary work, education, leisure interests and any other activities you consider relevant to the position.
- Make your answer specific:

For example, 'During my last job as a Receptionist at Queen's medical centre I...'

- Describe the skills that you have and how you have demonstrated them in the past:

For example, if asked to describe your team working skills, 'I regularly communicated ideas to my colleagues during team meetings. I liaised with colleagues about how to approach problems. I helped colleagues who were very busy...'

- Describe your actions and your reasons for them:

For example, if asked about your ability to prioritise, 'I dealt with customer queries first as providing a responsive service was very important. I then dealt with any written correspondence for the day...'

If you have a disability, which makes writing difficult, it is possible that the application can be completed in a different way. You should contact the Recruitment team and discuss this with them.

If you submit your CV please ensure that it is accompanied with a supporting statement that addresses how you meet the person specification for the role that you are applying for.

Most Housing21 jobs have a 12-noon deadline for applications. Make sure you submit your application before the deadline as we cannot accept late applications.

References

- As an employer committed to providing the best services we can to potentially vulnerable people, we aim to be rigorous in our selection methods and therefore we might request references for all short-listed candidates prior to interview.
- For all posts, all references will be taken up prior to the confirmation of a job offer. Until references which are satisfactory to the Association are received, only a conditional offer will be made.
- References must include one from your current or most recent employer.
- If you are unemployed include your last employer; if you have worked in a voluntary or unpaid capacity e.g. as a member of a Parent Teachers Association, you could include the chair of the committee among your referees.
- References from relatives or friends will not be accepted.

Criminal convictions

- You should read the section in this booklet about our policy on employing those with a criminal conviction.
- If the vacancy is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, you must declare all cautions, convictions (whether spent or unspent), reprimands, final warnings or pending criminal charges on the application form and tell us if there are proceedings outstanding against you.
- For all vacancies you must declare all and any unspent convictions.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire

- Housing 21 is committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff or other users of our services, regardless of race/ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, responsibility for

dependants, 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 qualifications based on their qualifications/experience, skills/abilities and knowledge

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity and continually monitor the effectiveness of our policy. To do this we ask applicants to supply information about their race/ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and whether they have a disability. The information is confidential and is not seen by the selection/interview panel. It will only be used to monitor our recruitment and selection process. Using this information, we can work to ensure our processes are fair and that no groups are disadvantaged.

Successful interviews

The purpose of an interview is to identify the best candidate for the job. A panel of two or three people will usually interview you. The length of the interview will depend on the level of post but, on average, it will last for about 30 to 45 minutes. For most of this time the interviewers will ask you questions which will all relate to the requirements listed in the person specification. At the end of the process you will be given some time to ask a few questions yourself. Think about any questions you wish to raise in advance.

You can begin to prepare for an interview by thinking of any previous experience of interviews during school/university or during your working life to date. Try to recall what worked well in these interviews and try to pinpoint what lessons you learned from these experiences.

The following tips will help you perform in interviews as effectively as possible:

- Before your interview, read through the person specification again. This document describes the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to carry out the job. The questions asked at interview will relate to the person specification.
- Try to predict what the questions will be, and ask a friend or colleague to help you to do this. Prepare answers for the questions you have identified. Write out the information needed for each answer. If there are gaps in your knowledge try to find out further information.
- Practice saying your answers out loud. Even if you know the theory, you will have to be able to convince the panel on the day. Ask a friend to put the questions to you, and then to give you feedback on your answers.
- All candidates are nervous in interviews, and panels make allowances for that. Some people may talk too much, and other may talk too quickly. If you identify how you react when nervous, then you will be able to address it on the day.
- The best interview responses are when the candidate tells the panel about a specific experience or piece of work that they completed in a past job or situation. Sharing a specific example of your past experience helps the panel to understand more clearly what experience you have and how you approach your work.

Returning the form

- If you can, take a copy of your completed application form as the interview may well include questions from it.
- Return it to the address indicated in the covering letter by the closing date. If it arrives late we may not be able to consider you.
- We can only measure your suitability from the information you provide.
- If you require any further advice or information on any of the above, please contact us.

Finally, thank you for applying and good luck.

- Aim to arrive a few minutes early so that you have time to compose yourself. Take a pen and paper, and bring some notes with you if you want to. The panel will not mind if you want to write down part of the question or refer briefly to your notes. You should however avoid reading them aloud or searching through piles of papers, as this could distract you from communicating effectively with the panel.
- At the start of the interview the chair of the panel will explain the interview structure to you. If anything is unclear, ask for clarification.
- The panel members will take it in turns to ask you questions. Listen carefully to them. If necessary, pause for a few seconds to make sure that you understand exactly what you are being asked before you start to answer. Resist the temptation to launch into a prepared answer which may not fit the question. It will not reflect badly on you if you ask for the question to be repeated or explained.
- Remember that the panel is trying to find out as much about you as possible. They are not trying to catch you out. If you have difficulty in answering a question, then the panel will try to prompt you. For example, the panel may ask, "would you like to say a bit more about...". This will give you a chance to add more to your answer.
- Do not assume that the panel members know everything about you or your work, even if you have written about it on your application form. Give details and examples of how you meet the person specification. Take every opportunity to sell yourself even if this feels rather artificial.
- Do not worry if you get stuck at any point in the interview and can't think what to say. Ask if you can leave the question for the moment, and come back to it later in the interview.

Finally, remember that this is your interview and not the panel's. Try to use the time to your best advantage. The interview should be a two-way process and you should take the opportunity to confirm that this is the right job and organisation for you.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996



We are required by law to verify your right to work in the UK. In order to do this we are required to inspect the original version of documents that demonstrate your eligibility and we must also take and retain a copy of those documents as evidence. The law prescribes what specific documents are considered acceptable for this purpose and these are either:

- One of the **original** documents in List 1
or
- Two **original** documents from one of the groups in List 2

Please note that although List 2 is split into two groups, both documents must come from the same group in

List 2. You cannot have one document from each of the groups.

List 1

- A passport showing that the holder is a British citizen, or has a right of abode in the United Kingdom;
- A document showing that the holder is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland – this must be a national passport or identity card;
- A resident permit issued by the Home Office to a national from a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder can stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay;
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder can stay in the United Kingdom; and that this endorsement allows the holder to do the type of work being offered if they do not have a work permit;
- An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office to an asylum seeker stating that the holder is permitted to take employment;
or
- A passport or other Home Office document with an endorsement giving the holder current right of residence in the UK as the family member of a national from a European Economic Area country or Switzerland who is resident in the UK.

List 2

Two documents from one of the Groups in this list:

Group 1

A document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and name. This could be a: P45, P60, National Insurance card, or a letter from a Government agency. In addition, one of the documents from the following list:

- A full birth certificate issued in the United Kingdom, which includes the names of the holder's parents;

- A birth certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland;
- A certificate of registration or naturalisation stating that the holder is a British citizen;
- A letter issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the person named in it can stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay;
- An Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it can stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay;
- A letter issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the person named in it can stay in the United Kingdom, and this allows them to do the type of work being offered;
or
- An Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it can stay in the United Kingdom, and this allows them to do the type of work being offered.

Group 2

A work permit or other approval to take employment issued by Work Permits UK.

In addition, along with a document issued by Work Permits UK, the employer should also check and copy one of the following documents:

- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder is able to stay in the United Kingdom and can take the work permit employment in question;
or
- A letter issued by the Home Office confirming that the person named in it is able to stay in the United Kingdom and can take the work permit employment in question.

Please note that the lists of documents in Groups 1 and 2 are not a precise extract from the relevant legislation. On occasions some further documents may be acceptable alternatives but this should always be checked with the Home Office directly.

Disclosure and Criminal Convictions

We provide services to vulnerable people and we believe that the people to whom we provide a service should be safe and protected. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1975) there are some posts for which we require information on all convictions – whether they are spent or not. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

As an organisation we use the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, we comply fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Unless the nature of the position allows us to ask questions about an applicant's entire criminal record we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A Disclosure is only requested on those posts listed below. These posts have been identified after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process for the post for which you are applying we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal records at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is completed on the application form and we guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. At interview, or in a separate meeting, we ensure that an open measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position.

Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or dismissal if this information is discovered after the person has started employment. If an existing member of the staff has moved from a post without a requirement to disclose conviction from a post which does, and the person has not been honest through the recruitment process, the conduct and capability policy and procedure will apply and dismissal may be the outcome. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the applicant before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Further Information on Disclosure

A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. It can be used by employers and voluntary organisations to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures are provided by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), an executive agency of the Home Office.

The Disclosure service offers organisations a means to check the background of job applicants to ensure that they do not have a

history that would make them unsuitable for posts they are trying to fill.

What is a Disclosure?

Disclosures will provide details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands

and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC). If the position involves working with children and/or vulnerable adults Disclosures will also contain details from lists held by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of those considered unsuitable for this type of work. Depending upon the level of Disclosure, it might also contain information held by local police forces.

There are three levels of Disclosure:

- Enhanced
- Standard
- Basic

For all the posts for which Housing 21 needs a Disclosure check, our assessment is that an Enhanced Disclosure is required.

Why have I been asked to apply for a Disclosure?

You may have been asked for an Enhanced Disclosure because you will be working with children or vulnerable adults; or will be working in an establishment that is wholly or mainly for children; or you will be working in social care.

Can I refuse to apply for a Disclosure?

Yes. However, there are some posts for which a Disclosure is required by law. If you refuse to apply for a Disclosure in this instance, we are within our rights not to take your job application any further.

What if I already have a Disclosure?

Disclosures are not transferable and you would have to apply for a new Disclosure check.

What if I have lived overseas?

If you have lived overseas for a substantial period of time, you should discuss this with the recruitment panel. Some overseas countries will co-operate and provide some information to help us assess your suitability. Also, for some posts we have a statutory duty to check a prospective employee against one or both of the lists held by the Department of Health (those individuals considered unsuitable to work with children).

Therefore, if you are a foreign national (with either a limited or no prior period of residence in the UK) and you are applying for one of these posts where we have a statutory duty to check the lists, you will be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure.

If, as a foreign national, you have also lived in the UK for a substantial period of time, a Disclosure may be required in addition to any overseas information we deem necessary.



How much will a Disclosure cost?

We are currently paying for an Enhanced Disclosure for each successful applicant.

How do I apply for a Disclosure?

You will be given a form when we make a provisional offer of a job. You will be asked to provide information that relates to you personally to confirm your identity and helps to speed up the process. This is similar to the information required under legislation which confirms your right to work in this country.

Once you have completed the form, you must send it to the HR department at Head Office.

What information do I need to give?

You will be asked for your full name and any other name that you may have been known by; addresses where you have lived during the past five years; your date and place of birth; your national insurance number; and other information such as passport/driving licence details. This is not a complete list, please contact the HR department for further details.

The information requested is to ensure the applicant has given their true identity and current address. The CRB is committed to compliance with the Data Protection Act. This means that any personal information that you submit to the CRB will be protected. For full details, please telephone the CRB general enquiries line on 0870 90 90 811 and request a copy of their data protection leaflet.

Who will receive my Disclosure?

You will receive your Disclosure in the post direct from the CRB. A copy of the Disclosure will also be sent to the HR department.

When will I receive my Disclosure?

You should receive your Enhanced Disclosure within three – four weeks of the completed application form being posted to the CRB. There is a dedicated phone line for disputes.

What if I have a criminal record that may not be relevant to the position for which I am applying?

Safeguards and guidelines have been introduced to ensure that conviction information is not misused and that ex-offenders are not treated unfairly.

Ex-offenders will retain the protection afforded by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The Code of Practice for Registered Bodies will govern the conduct of Housing 21 and prevent abuse of the system.

Can I challenge the information on my Disclosure if it is incorrect?

If you think that any information contained on your Disclosure is incorrect, please contact the Disclosure dispute line on 0870 90 90 778 immediately and ask about the dispute procedures.

For how long will Disclosures be valid?

Each Disclosure will show the date on which it was printed. Therefore, the older the Disclosure the less reliable it is. However, there will be no expiry date.

Further Information

If you would like more information about Disclosure or the CRB please contact:

Disclosure application line 0870 90 90 844

CRB general enquiries 0870 90 90 811

CRB website www.crb.gov.uk

(Telephone calls are charged at national rate. Calls will be recorded for security and may be monitored for training purposes).

Posts requiring Enhanced Disclosure

Activities Co-ordinators
Ancillary staff on courts
Assistant Home Care Managers
Block Managers
Care Administrators
Care Co-ordinators
Care Services Managers
Care Supervisors
Court Managers (including extra care housing)
Day Care Co-ordinators
Day centre staff
Home Care Assistants
Home Care Managers
Housing Services Managers
Mobile Squad Care & Repair Workers
NVQ Assessors/Verifiers
Regional Housing Services Managers
Scheme Co-ordinators
Senior Home Care Assistants
Senior Housing Services Managers
Senior Support Workers
Specialist Workers
Support Workers
Support Services Managers
Team Leaders (care)
Training Officers (care)