



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

CANDIDATE GUIDE

Before you apply for your role with us, please read this guide to understand our recruitment process, from application all the way through to onboarding

*Portsmouth City
Council*

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Welcome to Portsmouth City Council

Thank you for your interest in joining Portsmouth City Council. We are excited to welcome candidates who are passionate about making a positive impact on our city and the lives of the people that live and work here. This guide has been created to support you through every stage of the recruitment process—from application to onboarding—so you can feel confident and informed as you take the next step in your career. We are committed to fair, inclusive, and transparent recruitment and look forward to receiving your application.

As part of any recruitment process, Portsmouth City Council (PCC) collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. For more information on how we collect and process data, please read our [recruitment privacy notice](#).

Our values

At Portsmouth City Council, we have 5 key values:

Inclusive

We recognise diversity, are open, fair and provide equal opportunity to all.

Integrity

We are accountable, can be trusted and take responsibility for our actions.

Collaboration

We work together as a team and with our colleagues, residents, partners, and communities to achieve more.

Respect

We treat everyone with respect, considering the feelings, wellbeing, safety, and rights of others.

People Focused

We put people first and ensure our customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Everything we do is guided by our values. They set who we are as people, what we stand for, and how we act. You can read our [behaviours framework](#) for ways we recommend our staff put these values into practice.

Equal Opportunities

At Portsmouth City Council, we're all about inclusion and fairness. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and make sure our policies and practices support equal opportunities for everyone. We want our teams in the council to reflect the amazing diversity of the communities we serve.

We welcome applicants from different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, and we're building a workplace where you can be yourself and feel supported. When people feel happy and valued, they do their best work—and that's what we're aiming for.

We also know that not everyone starts from the same place or has access to the same opportunities. That's why we're committed to treating everyone fairly and helping you grow, no matter your background.

Inclusive recruitment

At Portsmouth City Council, we are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and to hold the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award.

As a Disability Confident Employer, we are committed to ensuring that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. We offer interviews for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria, provide reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process, and into employment for successful candidates as well as providing a supportive working environment.

Our Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award recognises our commitment to supporting members of the armed forces community, including veterans, reservists, service spouses and partners, and cadet instructors. We actively welcome applications from individuals in these groups and provide tailored support to help them transition into civilian employment.

We also support care experienced individuals applying for apprenticeships with us. If you have a healthcare or education plan with your local authority, or are care experienced, we offer an interview or assessment centre where the minimum criteria is met.

On occasions, where we receive a large number of applications, it is not always possible for us to interview all applicants that come under our corporate commitments. We welcome candidates from all backgrounds and experience and will aim to provide as many opportunities for interview as possible.

In line with our anonymised recruitment process (see below), our hiring managers do not have access to information about applicants disability disclosures or whether they come under our Armed Forces or care experienced commitment. Our recruitment team notifies managers of all candidates that are covered by our corporate commitments, but does not specify which one, to help keep applications anonymous. If you would like the hiring manager to be aware of anything to support you with the interview or assessment process, or you require any reasonable adjustments, please email recruit@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call the recruitment team on 02392 616800.

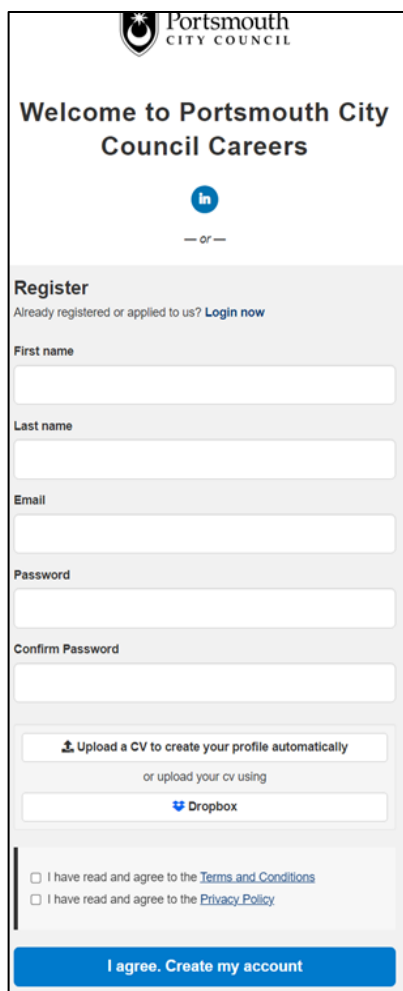
Step 1: Completing the Online application form

We use structured online application forms instead of CVs. This ensures fairness and consistency in shortlisting.

Create a candidate profile

When you apply for a role with us, you will be asked to create a profile using our Profile Builder. This will allow you to log back in, update your details, track your existing applications, complete any tasks assigned to you, and apply for other roles with us.

When you click **apply** on the job advertised on our career site, you will be directed to a log in screen to a screen similar to this one below.



The screenshot shows the registration page for Portsmouth City Council Careers. At the top, there is the Portsmouth City Council logo and the text "Welcome to Portsmouth City Council Careers". Below this is a LinkedIn icon and the text "— or —". The main section is titled "Register" and includes a link for "Already registered or applied to us? Login now". The form contains several input fields: "First name", "Last name", "Email", "Password", and "Confirm Password". There is also a section for uploading a CV, with a button that says "Upload a CV to create your profile automatically" and a sub-option "or upload your cv using" with a "Dropbox" button. At the bottom, there are two checkboxes for agreeing to the "Terms and Conditions" and "Privacy Policy", followed by a blue button that says "I agree. Create my account".

Once you've set up your account you can log in at any time to track the progress of your applications and view a record of the email communications we have sent to you.

It's easy to manage your details in our recruitment system.

You can:

- Update your personal details for example if you change address
- Change your GDPR preferences 'Opt ins'
- Manage your interview bookings
- View your job offer and fill out any related information we have asked you to complete.

Candidate opt ins

When you set up an account with us, you will be given a list of opt ins, in relation to communications you receive from us. To ensure you do not miss any key emails, please see below what each opt in means, and which ones we recommend:

Please note: These settings can be updated on the settings page of your account

Check all

I want to be automatically alerted when vacancies are posted by Portsmouth City Council that I might be interested in

I want Portsmouth City Council to contact me about other suitable opportunities that may arise. PLEASE NOTE: Opt-In is strongly advised to allow us to put you forward for multiple assignments or roles

I want to be kept informed of my application progress by Portsmouth City Council via text message, to the mobile number I provide on my application

I want to be informed by Portsmouth City Council of other company news by text message

[Save and continue](#)

- *I want to be automatically alerted when vacancies are posted by Portsmouth City Council that I might be interested in* - this allows you to receive job alerts when a role containing your saved searches is added. We recommend this if you want to be emailed the latest vacancies.
- *I want Portsmouth City Council to contact me about other suitable opportunities that may arise* - we would recommend this, in the event we need to add you to another vacancy or wish to contact you about a vacancy we have posted.
- *I want to be kept informed of my application progress by Portsmouth City Council via text message to the mobile number I provide on my application* - this allows you to receive text messages as well as emails, including when you have been invited to an interview, asking you to log in and book your slot, and reminder messages before your scheduled interview.
- *I want to be informed by Portsmouth City Council of other company news by text message* - this will keep you updated on general company news and you do not need to opt into this to receive the application updates advertised above.

What you'll need to create a candidate profile

- Personal details
- Employment history (with dates and responsibilities)
- Education and qualifications
- Personal statement tailored to the role

Anonymised recruitment process

We operate an anonymised recruitment process to promote fairness and reduce unconscious bias. This means that hiring managers will not see any personal details until you are invited to interview. Please ensure you do not include any personal information in your personal statement or other free-text sections of the application form.

Writing your personal statement

Your personal statement is the most important part of your application. It should:

- Address each point in the 'who is the person' section of the job profile using clear examples
- Be specific and concise
- Bring your skills and experience to life, to help us understand more about you

The personal statement box is a text box which prevents you from uploading documents. We would recommend drafting your personal statement in a word document and then copying and pasting it into the text box when you are ready to submit. You can save your application at any time by clicking the 'save and continue later' button that appears at the bottom of the screen.

Use of AI in job applications

At Portsmouth City Council, we understand that AI tools can be helpful when preparing job applications. However, we encourage candidates to ensure that all responses in their application form are written in their own words and reflect their personal experience and suitability for the role.

Employment history and gaps (safeguarding roles only)

If you are applying for a safeguarding role (including roles with safeguarding responsibilities or regulated activity), you must provide a full employment history covering the last five years, including explanations for any gaps in employment and/or education. This is a safeguarding requirement to ensure transparency and support safer recruitment practices.

For any support during the application process, please email recruit@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call 02392 616 800, where a member of the recruitment team will be more than happy to help.

Right to work

When you complete your application, you will be asked whether you have the right to work in the UK, and whether you depend on a visa to be in the UK. Portsmouth City Council offers sponsorship for a small number of roles, subject

to UK Visas and Immigration criteria. To find out more information around this, please visit [Skilled Worker visa: Overview - GOV.UK](#).

Step 2: Interview Process

Communication if shortlisted

We aim to respond to all candidates with an outcome of their application, including those that are not successful. If you are shortlisted for interview, we will contact you via email. Check your inbox and junk/spam folders regularly. Add the council's email domain (@portsmouthcc.gov.uk) to your safe senders list to avoid missing important updates.

Interview format

The interview process will vary depending on the role and the number of applications received. It will be either:

- An assessment centre: This may involve group exercises, written tasks, presentations, or role-specific simulations.
- A panel interview: Typically includes two or more interviewers (one of which is the line manager) asking a combination of values based and competency-based questions, on occasions this may also include a presentation and/or assessment.

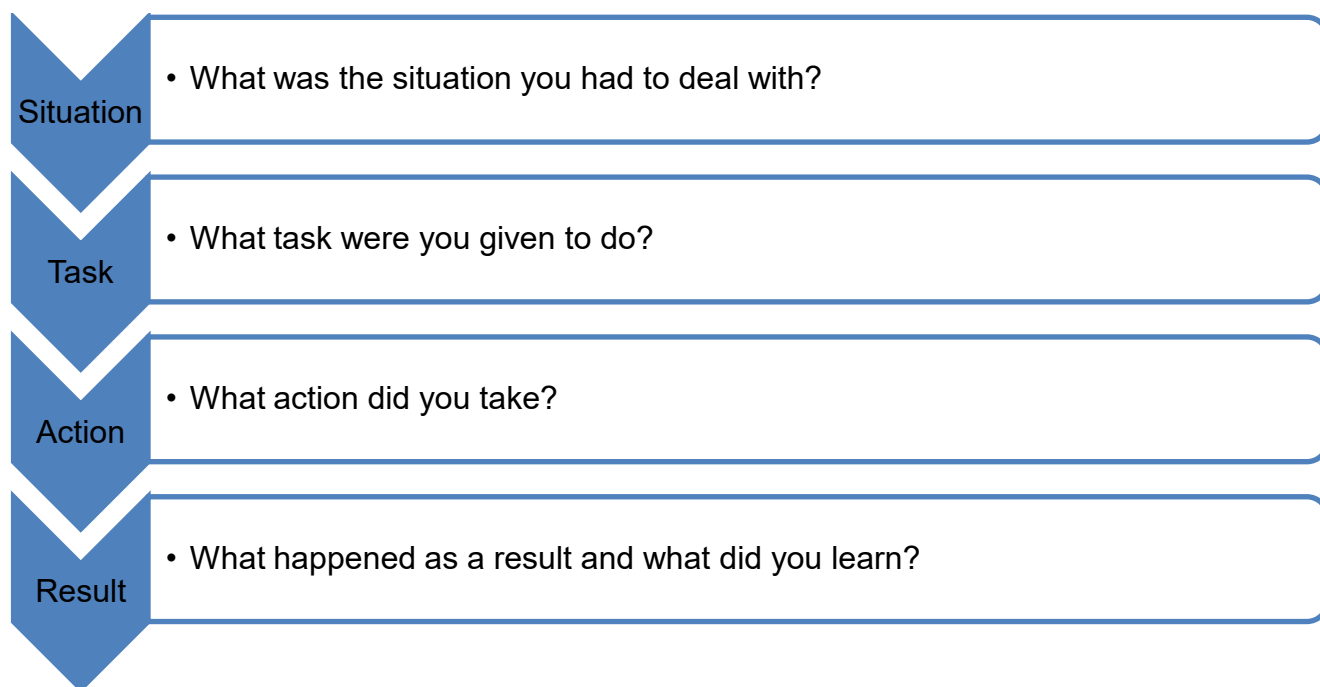
If you are invited to an assessment centre, successful candidates may be invited to a second stage interview as part of the overall process.

All the information you need to prepare for your interview will be sent to you in your invite to interview email. However, if you have any further questions on what to expect from the interview, or require any reasonable adjustments, please email recruit@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Hints and tips for interview preparation

Before the interview:

- Review the job profile, particularly the 'who is the person' points
- Reflect on your experience and prepare examples
- Research Portsmouth City Council's values
- Use the STAR method:

**Practice and prepare:**

- Prepare questions to ask
- Know your application and be ready to expand on it

On the day:

- Arrive early or log in early if virtual
- Dress appropriately
- Bring necessary documents (any documents you are required to bring to interview will be detailed in your invite to interview email)
- Stay calm and confident

During the interview:

- Listen carefully
- Answer clearly and concisely
- Be honest
- Engage with the panel

Step 3: Offer and Onboarding**Conditional offer**

If you are successful, you will receive a conditional offer subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. In your conditional offer email, you will be advised not to resign from your current role until these pre-employment checks are complete.

Once these pre-employment checks are completed and are satisfactory, you will then be contacted to discuss a start date.

Documentation requirements

Right to work:

- A British passport (current or expired)
- An Irish passport or passport card (current or expired)
- A UK / Irish birth or adoption certificate (plus your NI number proof)
- A certificate or registration or naturalisation as a British Citizen
- A share code
- Your eligible immigration documents

Two proof of address:

- Driving Licence (full or provisional)
- Utility bill, postal or printed and date-stamped in-branch bank statement or credit card statement issued in the last 3 months
- Council tax statement, mortgage statement issued in the last 12 months

Please note electronic statements or mobile phone statements are not accepted.

Proof of qualifications and professional registration:

- Original certificates or transcripts for required qualifications and professional registration.

References

All candidates must provide two professional references covering at least the last two years. One reference should be from your most recent employer. References must be professional, not personal. For safeguarding roles, one reference must be from your most recent role involving direct work with children and young people or vulnerable adults.

DBS and criminal record checks

For roles involving contact with children and young people or vulnerable adults, an Enhanced DBS check will be required. This includes checks against the Children's and/or Adults' Barred Lists, depending on the nature of the role. If the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, you must declare all criminal convictions, including those that are spent. Information on this can be found in the [Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order 1975](#).

Overseas police checks

If you have lived outside the UK within the last 10 years, you may be required to provide an overseas police check. This is especially important for safeguarding roles.

Final offer

Once all pre-employment checks have been completed, we will confirm your start date and issue your contract of employment. You will need to log into your careers account to review and accept your contract. If there are any specific instructions for your first day, these will be sent to you too.

We look forward to you joining us at Portsmouth City Council.

Support and Contact

Portsmouth City Council is committed to delivering a recruitment process that is fair, transparent, and inclusive. If you require any support or adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process, please contact us:

Email: recruit@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Phone: 023 9261 6800