
Dear Colleague,

This note provides some guidance Headteacher recruitment during the national Lockdown.

Local Authority Advice for Recruiting Headteachers

Prior to lockdown the local authority was advising schools to use a risk assessment to develop a process for recruiting Headteachers and we were advising that following a traditional recruitment process would be best where possible. Following the introduction of lock down at the beginning of January 2021 this advice has changed. We are now advising that if the leadership of a school can be maintained for an interim period it would be best to pause recruitment until lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

Where there is an acting Headteacher in place they should be paid at the relevant rate for the acting position and supported with best practice guidelines.

However, if a school believes that the leadership cannot be maintained or there is more risk to the school by not recruiting then they can go ahead and follow a virtual recruitment process. There are some advantages and disadvantages to recruiting virtually which are detailed below along with some guidance on how you may go about virtual recruitment.

Advantages of recruiting virtually:

- You will have access to a pool of candidates which you may miss out on if you pause your recruitment as they may decide to go to another employer that is continuing to recruit.
- Risks in relation to the leadership of the school would be mitigated.
- The school could progress appointments as they normally would using virtual platforms.
- Candidates will not need to travel so this may open up the pool of candidates wider for those looking to relocate but not able to travel at present.
- Technical ability can be assessed.
- It may open the pool of available panel members more widely.

Disadvantages of recruiting virtually:

- The inability to see the candidate's interaction with young people and the community they would serve.
- Inability of candidates to visit the school before applying.

- Technical problems – panel members or candidates dropping out of video call, screen fatigue, inability of panel members to access submitted videos, documents etc.
- Inability of panel members to observe interactions between candidates and panel members.
- Inability of panel members to observe teaching in a real-life situation.
- It is harder to assess soft skills virtually.
- Poor video quality can diminish the candidate's ability to show themselves at their best.
- It can be a time consuming and complicated process with not much scope for over running

How to conduct a virtual interview:

This will be dependent on the process you are following. The below process assumes that there will be a role play, interview questions, school-based exercise (in tray exercise) and presentation.

- Arrange for the invites to be sent to the candidates
- Arrange for role play scenario to be sent to the candidates ahead of the role play.
- Arrange for participants for the role play and send them invites and role play.
- Prepare interview questions and meeting to interview candidates.
- Prepare the school-based exercise and send to the candidates and observation of them doing the exercise then time for them to feedback.
- Send information for presentation to be sent to the candidates following the interview and allow them time to prepare the presentation.
- Arrange how the candidates will share the presentation including contingency arrangements such as emailing the presentation to the chair of the panel.
- Sharing of presentation.
- You may also want to arrange with each candidate to observe them remote teaching where possible.
- You will need to view the right to work documentation virtually and then ask the candidate to send you a copy.

Some ideas for mitigations of virtual interviews are:

- Allowing videos of own teaching to be submitted.
- Conducting timed in tray tasks.
- Panel can interview in breakout rooms.
- Recruitment could be over a number of days.
- Presentations online.
- Asking candidates to observe You tube collective worships/lessons etc and providing an evaluation.
- Finance tasks.
- Providing a checklist for governors to work through before conducting a virtual recruitment and selection process.

- A video tour of the school.

Governors, HR providers and Diocesan officers have been made aware of this advice for consistency.

If you have any questions about this email or ongoing COVID arrangements process please speak to your HR provider in the first instance and then contact Kerry Anderson, HR Business Partner – Education & Skills if you have any further queries
Kerry.anderson@cumbria.gov.uk

Government guidance can be found by following the below link

[Guidance for schools: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-coronavirus)