

# Candidate Guide

Recruitment & Selection

October 2023

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## 1. Introduction

We're delighted you're considering a career here within the Midlands Engine secretariat team.

The Midlands Engine is a pan-regional partnership funded by the Government and partners, the Partnership is supported by a dedicated and highly skilled team within the Midlands Engine secretariat. Our work is supported by our Accountable Body, who act as the employer for the Midlands Engine secretariat team. Contracts of employment with the Midlands Engine team fall under the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service made through the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services.

Our people are key to our success, we have set up our recruitment processes to be inclusive and hopefully attract the widest number of candidates as possible.

This candidate guide gives useful information about our recruitment processes, plus hints and tips to make your candidate journey with us a pleasant one.

You can find out more about the work of the Midlands Engine Partnership by visiting our website:

[www.midlandengine.org](http://www.midlandengine.org)

## 2. Our values

The work of the Midlands Engine secretariat is driven by our desire for a better future for the Midlands. We embrace a set of core values that guide every aspect of our team's work, with these values at our core, we are dedicated to working with partners across the Midlands to enable a brighter and more secure future for our region.

The Midlands Engine secretariat has collectively agreed on a set of team values driven by a shared purpose to create a lasting impact, as a team we:

- Co- craft and collaborate with partners to create compelling narratives, to shape investment and policy decisions.
- We ask 'what's our impact?' To ensure every action we take has significance.
- Seek out and communicate opportunities so we provide economic and social security for the Midlands, strengthening the position of the Midlands within the UK.
- Simplify complexity, offering clear insights into economic opportunities, and empowering our partners to realise and articulate growth opportunities.
- Apply a true partnerships approach, enabling partners to take forward opportunities themselves, offering support for the co-creation of solutions.

With these values as our driving force, we are dedicated to taking the Midlands towards a future of increased prosperity for our region.

### **3. Applying for our roles**

All our roles are advertised through a variety of recruitment platforms. For each role, we attach the job description and person specification so that you can find out more about the key responsibilities of the role and what skills, experience, and/or qualifications we are seeking.

#### **Job description & person specification**

The job description will explain to you the key responsibilities of the role and what skills, experience, and/or qualifications are required for the role. The person specification also shows which criteria are essential, shown by the disability confidence symbol next to those criteria.

#### **Disability Confident, Care Leavers & Armed Forces Covenant**

If you come under one of these categories, then we guarantee if you meet the minimum essential criteria for the role that you'll be shortlisted for to interview/assessment stage.

#### **Our adverts**

Within our advert, you'll see a summary of the key things you'll do in the role, where roles can be performed part-time, as a job share, hybrid, or even via remote working we will indicate this too. However, if it doesn't say, or you have questions about the role please get in touch with the contact details provided in the advert.

#### **Filling out your application**

We ask you to send us a copy of your CV and a covering note identifying your skills and experience in meeting the role requirements.

Take a look at the job description and let us know which of those essential criteria you'll bring to the role and anything extra. It's your chance to tell us why you'll make a great addition to our team here at the Midlands Engine and for the role.

### **4. Shortlisting**

At the shortlisting stage the recruiting manager will review all applications against the essential criteria for their role. If a high number of applications are received the recruiting manager may then bring in some of the desirable criteria to be able to come to a suitable shortlist for the next stage. In some instances, they may request further information from you if it's unclear whether you meet the essential criteria so do keep a check on the email you have used to apply in case they try to get in touch.

Given the high number of applications, it may not be possible to respond to every application received. Please be aware that if you haven't received an invitation to interview by the interview date your application has not been successful. Please note that we do not routinely provide feedback on applications that have not shortlisted for interview.

### **5. Interview and assessment**

As with many organisations we tend to do in-person interviews, but we also use Microsoft Teams virtual interviews too.

## In person interviews

We'll let you know in your invite where the interview is being held, and any local information you might need such as where to park and who to ask for on arrival.

## Microsoft Teams interviews

If the interview or assessment stages is being held on Teams you will need MS Teams on your device to be able to join the meeting. You can download MS Teams from your usual App Store or via Microsoft on your laptop or PC. You won't need to pay for the app, just use the free version and you'll be able to join as a 'guest' on your interview day. We'll send the MS Teams invite to the email address you've applied to us with. Here's a helpful link to a video from Microsoft showing you a walkthrough of [how to join teams meetings](#).

## Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

If you have any special requirements or need any adjustments to our recruitment process, please do let us know. You'll find contact details for the role you've applied for either in the advert or on your email invites to interview and/or assessment stages so you can get in touch with them in the first instance or for further support please email the contact name in the job advert.

## 6. Interview hints & tips

When you attend an interview or assessment with us, we want to give you the best opportunity to show us your skills and experience, so we've put together a few pointers to help you prepare.

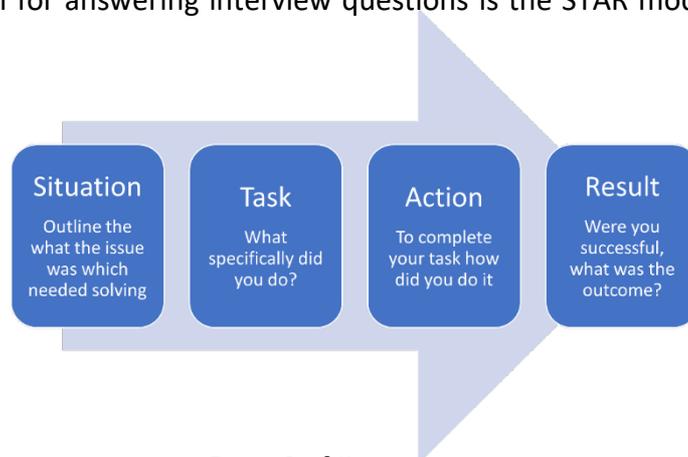
**Plan** - Where is the interview being held – if it's in person, check the route, plan your journey, and where will you park. If online, have you got your joining link, are you using a laptop or a phone – is it fully charged?

**Task, presentation, or assessment** – were you asked to prepare a presentation for your interview? Have you been sent an assessment or task to complete? Make sure you check the invite and email to see if there are any other elements to complete or prepare.

**Things to take with you / have to hand** – please come with your right to work, proof of address, proof of qualifications. Do you like to ask questions at the interview and perhaps need to take your notebook?

**Review the advert, job description & the Midlands Engine website** – it's always good to remind yourself of the key things the role needs from you and also what the values of the organisation are. This can help you see how you'll fit into the organisation and which of your skills are going to add the most value for the employer.

**Practice** – it's always good to try and predict some of the questions you may get asked and prepare some answers. Try popping these down as bullet point prompts and practice answering some standard interview questions. Also, if you need to have specific technical knowledge, make sure you are up to date with your knowledge. A great model for answering interview questions is the STAR model as shown on the following page.



This STAR Model gives you a blueprint for covering everything you would need when answering interview questions or competency questions more generally even in application forms. It also ensures you draw on examples from real-life experience or where that's not possible follow the steps through STAR and think what you would do in that situation to demonstrate you know what would be needed.

## 7. Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity across all services as well as in the employment of our staff. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and we welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

The Midlands Engine follows the Accountable Body's Equality Policy to support our commitment to promoting inclusion.

Disability Confident, Care Leavers & Armed Forces Covenant - If you come under one of these categories then we guarantee if you meet the minimum essential criteria for the role that you'll be shortlisted to the interview/assessment stage.

## 8. Right to work, proof of address, proof of qualification

Any document/s you provide must be an original and must be provided when requested during the recruitment process.

### *Proof of Address*

We'll ask you to provide proof of address during the selection process. Whilst not an exhaustive list, the following original documents can be accepted as proof of address:

- Recent utility bill\*
- Recent mortgage statement\*
- Recent bank/building society statement\*
- Current full UK Driving Licence (Paper document)
- Current UK / EU Photocard Driving Licence with Counterpart
- Current house or motor insurance certificate
- Current council tax bill

\*dated in the last 3 months

Please note proof of address cannot be from the same source as "right to work" documentation.

### *Proof of Qualification*

If applicable and where this is a necessary requirement to be able to perform the role you have applied for, we will ask you to provide proof of relevant qualification/s during the selection process.

### *Right to Work in the UK*

If you are offered the post, we must take copies of evidence that you can legally work within the UK; Please see the list of acceptable documents here: [Right to work list of documents](#) which details the acceptable documents/combinations of documents that we must see and copy.

**Please bring original documents with you if you are invited to interview.**

## 9. References

The policy is to obtain references covering the last three years of your employment (or school /college/university for students). But don't worry we'll ask you to provide this information during the recruitment process when we need it.

You can help us get your referencing completed without delay by making sure you:

- Provide reference details for your full 3 years for all other roles
- Provide valid contact details for your referees including email address and contact number
- Advise your referees where possible to expect our reference request via email initially

Please note that references from relatives or friends are not acceptable.

## 10. Conflicts of interest

We are required to ensure that the confidentiality of our partners is protected and we are aware of any personal relationships that may call into question a conflict of interest, we therefore undertake the most stringent vetting of our staff. This includes thorough referencing, social media, scrutiny of previous employment history, and checks against our client and employee records. All employees are required to disclose any personal interests that may conflict in any manner or degree with the activities of the work of the Midlands Engine.

A trace against these does not mean that applicants are unsuitable for employment. It does, however, allow us to explore and address any potential conflicts of interest and also to assess suitability for employment.

Submitting your application form indicates your consent for such checks to be undertaken.

## 11. GDPR

Data Protection Legislation places responsibilities on us to process personal data that we hold fair and properly.

We collect personal information from you when you register with us to make any application. Information we collect includes name, email address, and other contact details. We will use this information to communicate with you generally and to assess your application.

The personal data supplied in your job application will be used for recruitment and selection purposes and if appointed to the job any subsequent personal information provided throughout your employment, including sensitive personal data (e.g., medical health, references, etc.) will be held and processed for employment purposes by the Accountable Body and any third-party organisations that provide services on their behalf. Any organisations that process your personal data on behalf of our Accountable Body have the same legal obligation to comply with data protection legislation.

Personal information relating to your application will be kept in secure conditions. If you are unsuccessful, your personal data will normally be destroyed after 1 year. If you are successful, the data will be retained both for the duration of your employment and for a period after in line with the Accountable Body's retention and disposal schedule.

Further details on how we process your personal data are available on our Accountable Bodies site <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Your-council-and-democracy/Privacy-notices/Privacy-notice.aspx>

## **12. Politically restricted roles**

All roles at the Midlands Engine are classed as politically restricted as stated in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and so this means that individuals who hold them are prevented from having any active political role either in or outside the workplace. This not only prohibits post holders from holding or standing for elected office (excluding Parish Council seats) but also prevents you from the following;

Participating in political activities, publicly expressing support for a political party, or undertaking other activities such as canvassing on behalf of a person who seeks to be a candidate; speaking to the public at large, or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression that they are advocating support for a political party.

## **13. Relationship to partners / employees canvassing**

To ensure fairness in our recruitment process we ask through our application process whether you are related to an elected Member, or Officer, of the Midlands Engine Partnership or secretariat. We will not be able to appoint you if you canvass any directly or indirectly to an elected Member, or Officer, of the Midlands Engine Partnership or secretariat, this means asking for help and influence to get a job using their position in the Midland Engine secretariat.

## **14. Cabinet Office, Fair Processing protocol**

The Accountable Body for the Midlands Engine is under a duty to protect the funds it administers and to this end may use the information you have provided as part of the recruitment process for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

As part of this ongoing responsibility, our accountable Body - Staffordshire County Council participates in the Cabinet Office National Fraud Initiative every two years. Key payroll and other data are used in a matching exercise to identify frauds, data errors, etc; For further information please visit [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/nfi](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/nfi).

## **15. Pension and benefits**

We recognise that it is our employees that are central to everything we do. We aim to create a supportive working environment where employees can achieve their full potential and achieve a healthy work-life balance.

In addition to your salary, as a member of our team, you will have access to a range of benefits including:

- A competitive starting salary with annual increments - to the top of the scale
- Travel costs, through our travel agent for permitted travel or through the Staffordshire County Council's mileage allowance scheme. For senior appointments the Council mileage allowance scheme does not apply and a lease car subsidy or cash alternative is provided.
- Annual leave – generous holiday entitlements depending upon your role and length of service. Plus eight bank and public holidays and two extra statutory days with the flexibility of using these two days when you like
- Annual leave purchase scheme
- Flexi-time scheme – this is available which means you can take up to one flexi-day per month. Or you can bank your flexi-days and use them in up to a block of five consecutive days
- Pension – an excellent defined local authority benefit pension scheme with an option to add Additional Voluntary Contributions via salary sacrifice

- Maternity / Paternity / Family leave
- Professional development – access to relevant professional development, regular training and supervision
- Smart working, you will be supplied with a Wi-Fi-enabled laptop and a mobile phone

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The Midlands Engine is a coalition of local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, universities and businesses across the region, actively working with government to build a collective identity to enable us to present the Midlands as a competitive and compelling offer that is attractive at home and overseas.  
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