**Independent Person**

**Application Pack**

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**1. Background Information**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, local authorities have a duty to:-

* promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted members and by Councillors of the Town and Parish Councils;
* adopt a Code of Conduct which Councillors and Co-opted Members are required to observe; and
* appoint an Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities.

Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and South Yorkshire Fire Authority jointly appoint the Independent Persons to meet the above duty and their terms of office are due to end shortly. Both Councils will continue to share the Independent Persons.

Following legislative changes in May 2015, there is also a role for the Independent Persons on a Panel that would advise the Full Council of each Authority on matters relating to the dismissal of any of three Statutory Officers (the Head of the Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer).

Further details concerning the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included in this recruitment pack.

Any appointments are a subject to approval at Full Council.

**Application for the position of Independent Person**

Individuals who wish to be considered for the appointment as an Independent Person are requested to provide the following information in support of their application. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of selection. Please use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any of the questions.

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| 1. **PERSONAL DETAILS** |  |
| **Your Name:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Address:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Postcode:** |  |
|  |  |
| **National Insurance Number** |  |
|  |  |
| **CONTACT DETAILS** |  |
|  |  |
| **Daytime telephone** |  |
|  |  |
| **Evening telephone** |  |
|  |  |
| **Mobile telephone** |  |
|  |  |
| **e-mail address:** |  |

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| 2. **QUALIFICATIONS** |  |
| Please list in particular any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Independent Person. | |
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| 3. **SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE** |  |
| Please give a brief account of your experience including career, public and voluntary work together with the nature of your current or most recent occupation. | |
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| 4. **RELEVANT EXPERTISE AND SKILLS** | | |  |
| Outline briefly any knowledge or expertise which you believe would be particularly relevant to the role of Independent Person having regard to the selection criteria for the position. | | | |
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| 5. Tell us why you wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person and what particular attributes you believe you would bring to the role. | | | |
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|  | | | |
| 6. Please provide any additional information you may wish to give in support of your application. | | | |
|  | | | |
| 7. | **REFERENCES**  References will be taken up for all applicants who are invited for interview. | | |
| Name  Address  Telephone No.  e-mail address | | Name  Address  Telephone No.  e-mail address | |
| 8. | **DECLARATION OF CONVICTIONS**  Please give any details of convictions you have for criminal offences. | | |
|  | (**NOTE: Some convictions become “spent” after a specified period of time and need not be declared – Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)**  I have a criminal conviction *(please tick as appropriate)* **YES NO**  If **YES,** please give details: | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9. | **DECLARATION**  I wish to apply to be an Independent Person at the Council. In submitting this application, I declare that: |
|  | * I am not and have not been during the past five years been a Member, Co-opted Member or Officer of Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council, South Yorkshire Fire Authority or of any Parish or Town Council within either Authority’s area. * I am not related to, or a close friend of, any Member, Co-opted Member or Officer of Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council or South Yorkshire Fire Authority. * I am not actively engaged in local party political activity     Signed:  Date:  Please return this application form by **midnight on Friday 10th November 2023** to:-  Sarah Hyde, Democratic Services Team Manager, Sheffield City Council  Town Hall, Sheffield S1 2HH or email [sarah.hyde@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.hyde@sheffield.gov.uk) |

**3. Independent Person: Person Specification**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** | **Method of Assessment** |
| **Experience** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1. Experience of dealing with  complaints and knowledge of judicial/ quasi-judicial complaints processes |  |  | Application Form/Interview (AF/I) |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Qualifications and Training** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 2. A good general education,  sufficient to deal with relevant  paperwork and issues |  |  | AF/I |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Special Skills and Knowledge** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 3. Analysis of complex information and ability to form a balanced  opinion |  |  | AF/I |
| 4. Ability to exercise sound  judgement |  |  | AF/I |
| 5. Ability to take an objective view  of sometimes emotive situations |  |  | AF/I |
| 6. Ability to communicate well and express ideas or points of view effectively |  |  | AF/I |
| 7. An effective listener |  |  | AF/I |
| 8. Ability to analyse and solve  complex problems |  |  |  |
| 9. Ability to persuade and  Influence |  |  | AF/I |
| 10. Knowledge of local  government or large organisations and the sensitivity to the political process |  |  | AF/I |

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| **Personal Qualities** |  |  |  |
| 11. High standards of personal  integrity and a commitment to  equal opportunities |  |  | AF/I |
| 12. Firm belief in the importance of  high standards of probity and  conduct in public life |  |  | AF/I |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Other criteria** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 13. Be available to attend meetings in the day time or early evening and at relatively short notice |  |  | AF/I |
|  |  |  |  |
| 14. Contactable during normal office hours |  |  | AF/I |

**4.** **Role Description**

The main function is to undertake the statutory role of Independent Person appointed under Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 and to help the Council discharge its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst members

and co-opted members.

Responsible to: Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council and South Yorkshire Fire Authority (The Authority)

1. To assist the Authority in promoting high standards of conduct by elected, appointed and co-opted members of the Authority and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Authority and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

2. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the relevant

Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint,

seek a local resolution or take no action.

3. To be consulted by the Authority through the Monitoring Officer and/or the relevant

Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of the relevant Committee for this purpose.

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4. To be available for consultation by any member who is the subject of a standards

complaint.

5. Reaching balanced and reasoned conclusions having considered complex material and applied an impartial and fair approach to all of the written and oral material provided.

6. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within the Authority.

7. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed specifically for Independent Persons and training events organised by the Authority’s relevant Committee

8. To act as an ambassador for the Authority in promoting ethical behaviour.

9. May be required to serve on a Panel advising the Full Council of either Authority on matters relating to the dismissal of any of the three Statutory Officers.

**5.** **Independent Person: Eligibility Criteria**

i. A person cannot act as an Independent Person if they are:-:

1. a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council or South Yorkshire Fire Authority;
2. a councillor, co-opted member or officer of a Parish or Town Council

which falls within the Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council or South Yorkshire Fire Authority areas; or

1. \*a relative or close friend of a person in (a) or (b) above.

ii. In addition, a person may not become an Independent Person if, during the

last five years preceding the date of the appointment, they were:

1. a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council, or South Yorkshire Fire Authority; or
2. a member, co-opted member or officer of a Parish or Town Council

within the Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Borough Council’s or South Yorkshire Fire Authority areas

iii. The existing Independent Persons appointed by Sheffield City Council and Barnsley Borough Council are eligible to reapply for the positions.

\*A relative is defined as:

(a) The candidate’s spouse or civil partner;

(b) Any person with whom the candidate is living as if they were spouses or civil partners;

(c) The candidate’s grandparent;

(d) Any person who is a lineal descendent of the candidate’s grandparent;

(e) A parent, brother, sister or child of anyone in paragraphs (a) or (b);

(f) The spouse or civil partner of anyone within paragraphs (c), (d) or (e);

or

(g) Any person living with a person within paragraphs (c), (d) or (e) as if

they were spouse or civil partner to that person.

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| **6.** **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE** |
| The Localism Act 2011 specifies that the Council’s adopted Code of Conduct should be consistent with the following seven principles of public life.   * **SELFLESSNESS**   Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.   * **INTEGRITY**   Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.   * **OBJECTIVITY**   In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.   * **ACCOUNTABILITY**   Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.   * **OPENNESS**   Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.   * **HONESTY**   Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.   * **LEADERSHIP**   Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example. |
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