

# Candidate Guide

## Recruitment

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## 1.0 Introduction

There's never been a better time to join us at the award-winning City of Wolverhampton Council. We are a progressive and forward focussed organisation, passionate about making our city better for all who live, work and play here. We are an ambitious organisation focused on delivering the best for the people of Wolverhampton; working here gives you the opportunity to make a difference to their lives.

Our continual drive for improvement led to us winning Overall Council of the Year Service Delivery Award, at the APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence). Plus achieving Annual Service Award Finalists for our services in Waste and Recycling; Public Protection; Best Housing Regeneration and Homelessness multi-agency work, showing that the City of Wolverhampton Council is truly an organisation delivering daily excellence in all we do.

City of Wolverhampton Council operates a Guaranteed Interview Policy for people with disabilities, who are care leavers and under the age of 25 or who are veterans - This means that if you apply for a job and you meet the essential job criteria, you will be short listed for interview.

We also pride ourselves on being a Disability Confident Employer, which means we take continuous action to improve how we recruit, retain and develop employees with a disability.

We also provide a 'buddy' to support disabled employees address any barriers they may encounter and help to resolve these constructively and amicably.

## 2.0 Why work for City of Wolverhampton Council

Working for the City of Wolverhampton Council brings with it a whole host of rewards, which are on top of our competitive salaries. Our salaries automatically increase year on year within all pay grades plus increase yearly in line with inflation. Additionally, as a council employee you can also take advantage of the following benefits:

- A generous annual leave entitlement starting at 25 days (plus bank holidays), which increases with length of service.
- Up to 10 days' additional annual leave through the Buying Annual Leave salary sacrifice scheme.
- An excellent Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with employee and employer contributions based on salary grades and the option to convert your pension for tax-free cash when you retire.
- A wide range of flexible working options to fit around your commitments including (role permitting):
  - Flexi-time
  - Reduced hours working

## Sensitivity: NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- Job share
- Homeworking
- Term time only
  
- Free, confidential and independent support 24/7 through Care First, the Council's Employee Assistance Programme as part of a wide range of wellbeing support, your wellbeing is incredibly important to us.
- A world of money saving discounts and offers from top brands including Asda, Argos and Marks and Spencer via the Council's own 'Our Rewards' portal.
- Discounted corporate membership of WV Active, the Council's leisure facilities starting at £10 per month).
- Heavily discounted corporate health cash plan, which can save you hundreds of pounds a year on everyday healthcare costs such as visiting the dentist, opticians or physiotherapist.
- Great rates on ethical savings and loans with deductions taken directly via payroll with Wolverhampton City Credit Union.
- A range of salary sacrifice schemes (money paid before tax is taken), which allow you to sacrifice part of your salary each month in exchange for the latest technology, a bike for commuting to work or a car.
- Annual substantially discounted travel cards for use on the bus, train or metro, which are paid for monthly via a payroll deduction.
- Discounted city parking at a number of city centre locations, with reduced charges for blue badge holders.
  
- Free will writing and family law clinics with local law firms.

We invest heavily in skills and training for our employees; you will develop and grow with us throughout your employment, you will receive regular professional development conversations and varied training opportunities bespoke to you and your role.

Taken from our corporate/people plan 'we will continue to develop a highly talented and empowered workforce with the skills, drive and innovation to meet ever changing demands, and to work collaboratively and confidently to tackle our city's priorities'. Our core values are aligned to PRIDE and outlined below:

- Put people first
- Raise the city's profile and reputation
- Inspire trust and confidence
- Deliver together
- Empower people to innovate

The council offers an excellent Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with

employee and employer contributions based on salary grades and other benefits including:

- Index linked pension
- 50/50 option
- Option to convert your pension for tax-free cash when you retire
- Retirement on the grounds of ill-health at any age
- Coaching and Mentoring programmes (part of the pension or extra benefit)
- Leadership Schemes as above
- Apprentice opportunities as above

### **3.0 What to expect when you are invited to an interview/assessment**

Whether you are attending an interview in person or having an interview virtually, you can be assured that all interview panels will be made up of a diverse panel. All interviewers are fully trained in unconscious bias. This means that those on the panel will be a mixture of genders and ethnicities and have been trained to be consciously aware of any unconscious biases they could have, thus ensuring a fair and equitable process is followed throughout every stage of the process. These panel members were also responsible for shortlisting you to attend the interview.

### **4.0 Shortlisting**

Anonymised applications are utilised for all vacancies at any pay grade which means recruiting managers only see applications as a number, not by personal details. This allows managers to focus only on the content of application forms and enables a truly unbiased approach, as no opinion is based on gender, ethnicity etc.

### **5.0 Interviews**

Only once the manager has shortlisted the application will the personal details be made available and visible to them.

Questions asked at interview are designed jointly by the managers and HR. These can be competency based, therefore we suggest that you have some scenario-based answers ready in preparation. They will require you to give examples of where you have demonstrated the specific skill being measured as part of the interview.

The manager may ask for an example, what you did, how it was measured and what you may have done differently, with hindsight. These questions are designed to really understand you and how you deal with real life scenarios.

Therefore, be thorough and detail everything *you* did specifically:

- All questions will be relevant to the job and be based on the job description and person specification so ensure you familiarise yourself with these documents prior to the interview – every job will have one included within the advert.

- Qualifications required for the position may also be requested at the interview so ensure you have original copies available, as well as any documents required for pre-employment checks, for example Right to Work checks and DBS checks, if applicable to the role (this will be stated in your interview invite letter).
- Candidates should receive feedback at every stage from the manager and communication throughout the process. Feedback should be given to candidates within 5 days of their interview.
- The process will be formal however panel members are trained to get the best from candidates, each panel member will ask questions and make notes to score your answers accordingly.

## 6.0 Top tips for candidates

<p><b>Practice and prepare</b></p>	<p>Your answers to interview questions should emphasise the skills that are most important to the employer and relevant to the position. Be sure to review the job details, make a list of the requirements, and match them to your experience.</p> <p>Prepare some examples of answers to scenarios using the 'STAR' interview response technique – S – set the scene by sharing the context around the Situation or challenge you faced. Try to use a work example, although you could refer to others where you may have transferable skills to highlight. T – Describe the Task – this is your role/responsibility in the situation described above. Action – how did you respond to the challenge, what did you do? If you refer to the team response, make sure you explain what <i>you</i> did. Result – Talk about two/three results that were achieved, pick the most impressive.</p>
<p><b>Get ready ahead of time</b></p>	<p>Decide on your outfit the night before, re-read the job description and person specification and have questions, a pad and paper ready.</p>
<p><b>Be on time</b></p>	<p>This means be early, arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the interview time allocated. If need be, visit the interview location ahead of time so you know exactly where you are going and how long it will take to get there. Consider the time of your interview so you can adjust for local traffic patterns at that time. Give yourself a few extra minutes to visit the restroom, check your outfit, and calm your nerves.</p>
<p><b>Try to stay calm</b></p>	<p>During the job interview, try to relax and stay as calm as possible. Remember that your body language says as much about you as your answers to the questions.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. As you answer questions, maintain eye contact with the interviewer.</li><li>2. Avoid cutting off the interviewer at all costs, especially when he or she is asking questions.</li><li>3. If you need to take a moment to think about your answer, that's totally fine, and is a better option than starting out with multiple "ums" or "uhs."</li><li>4. Pay attention to the question so that you don't forget it, and listen to the entire question before you answer, so you know exactly what the interviewer is asking. You could have a note pad nearby to write down key words to help you remember and refer to when responding to the question. Don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat the question.</li><li>5. Have a list of your own questions ready to ask the panel. In almost every interview, you'll be asked if you have any questions for the interviewer. It is important to have at least one or two questions prepared in order to demonstrate your interest in the organisation.</li></ol>
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## 7.0 Virtual interviews

Virtual or video interviews have been utilised widely recently and have become the normal approach by many organisations, during these unprecedented times. They can save time and expense for both you and the employer and can be a great substitute for face to face interviews.

To help you adapt to these changing times and if you are asked to undertake a virtual interview, we have put together some tips which may help you perform your best on the day, any queries do not hesitate to contact the recruiting manager. We are utilising Microsoft Teams and a guide to how to use this is included at the end of the guide.

- **Background and environment**

Try and set yourself up in a quiet, tidy and well-lit room. Have your laptop or device at eye level and test this prior to the interview. It can be easily adjusted using books to achieve the correct height for you. Also try to have a major light source in front of you so it lights your face.

If at home, try to minimise distractions by informing the household you have an interview and require no interruptions. Pets and doorbells can be a distraction. Also try and limit other household use of the internet during your interview time so as you get a great connection.

- **Be prepared**

Ensure your laptop or device is fully charged and other applications have been closed that are not required and may be running in the background. Inform other family members and friends of the interview so they do not call you during this time. Also download the TEAMS application ahead of the interview and ensure it works, check your microphone is on and your camera is connected and operational.

- **Dress appropriately**

Whilst it is generally accepted that more casual dress is worn when working from home, you may wish to consider this when making your first impression and if your attire would be worn at a face to face interview

- **Practice**

Practice makes perfect! Take time to practice with the technology, practice talking into the camera to ensure you are comfortable and ready to impress the panel. Try to look at the camera rather than the screen as this will achieve great eye contact during the video interview. The recruiting manager may suggest a test before hand to ensure everything works correctly, if not and you would prefer to check on this, please do not hesitate to suggest this to the manager.

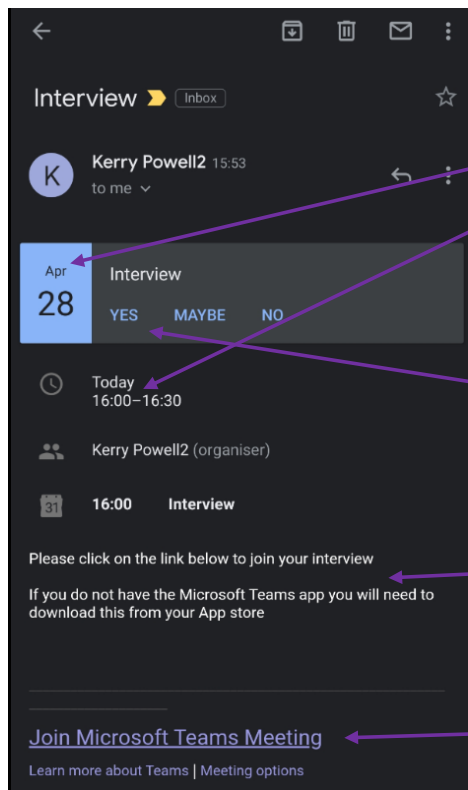
- **What's the difference?**

There is little difference between a virtual and face to face interview once you are comfortable and confident with the technology. Just be yourself and answer the questions to the best of your ability in line with the job description and person specification, sharing the skills and experience that you have that makes you the best candidate for the job.

We will of course make any adjustments to how we interview or offer more time for you if you have a disability, or pre-disclosed disadvantaged position such as (access to technology/ internet/ experience of virtual platforms).



## 8.0 How to prepare for your interview using Microsoft Teams



You will receive an email detailing the interview date and time

If you have previously selected your preferred interview time slot, then this should match the time you have chosen

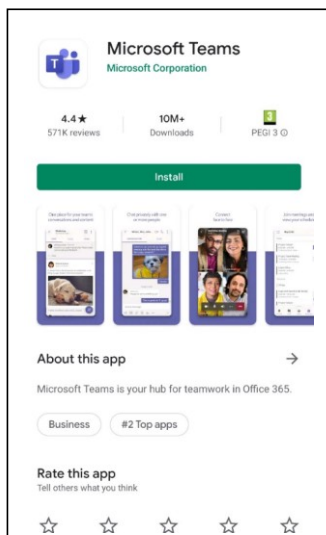
If you have your calendar synched to your phone, then you can accept or decline the interview here (if you accept then it will be added to your calendar as an event)

Additional information will be listed here

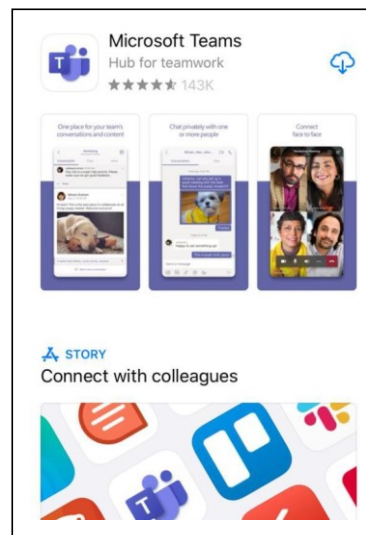
To join your interview meeting, click on this link

**▲ IMPORTANT INFORMATION – If you are using your phone then you must download the Microsoft Teams App from your app store prior to your interview**

### For Android



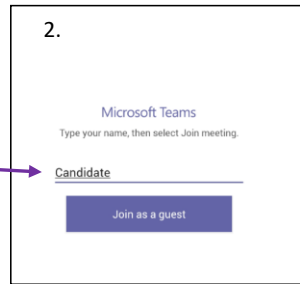
### For iPhone



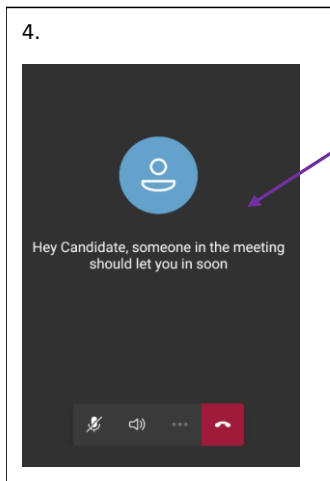
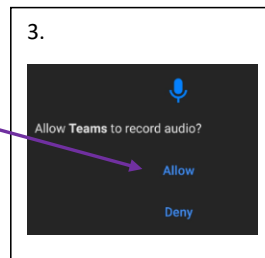
[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)



Join as a guest and add your name here

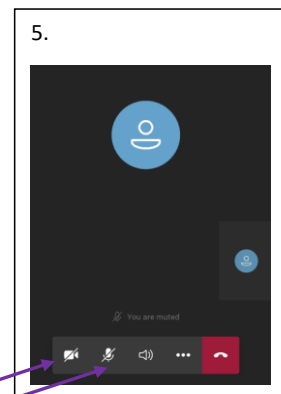


Click 'Allow' to use your microphone

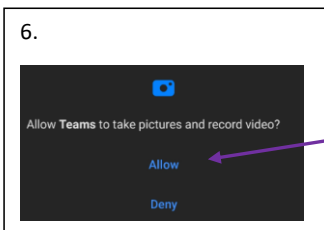


You will then need to wait to be added to the interview meeting by the chair of the panel

**▲ IMPORTANT INFORMATION**  
If you are currently an employee of the City of Wolverhampton Council, then you will automatically join the meeting interview

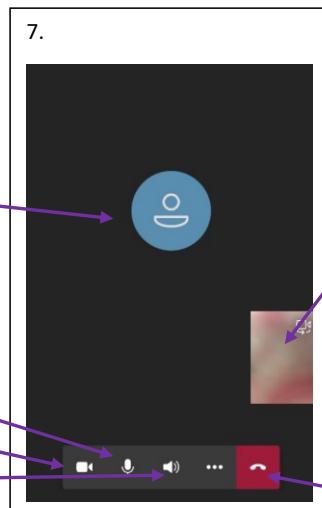


You will need to click to unmute your camera and microphone



Click 'Allow' to use your camera

You will see the panel members here



You will see your own image here

You can also end the interview meeting by clicking here

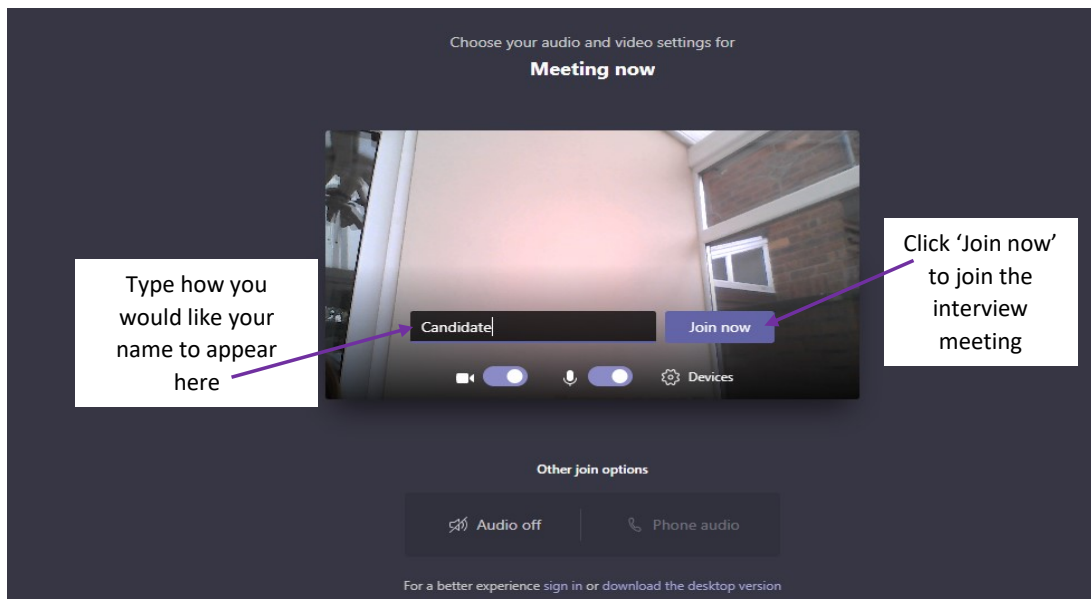
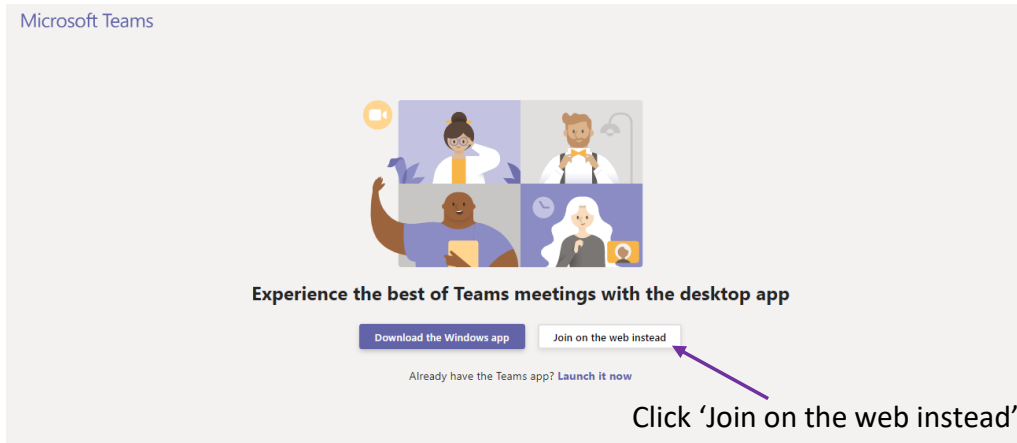
You can mute your camera or microphone if you need to by clicking on these icons

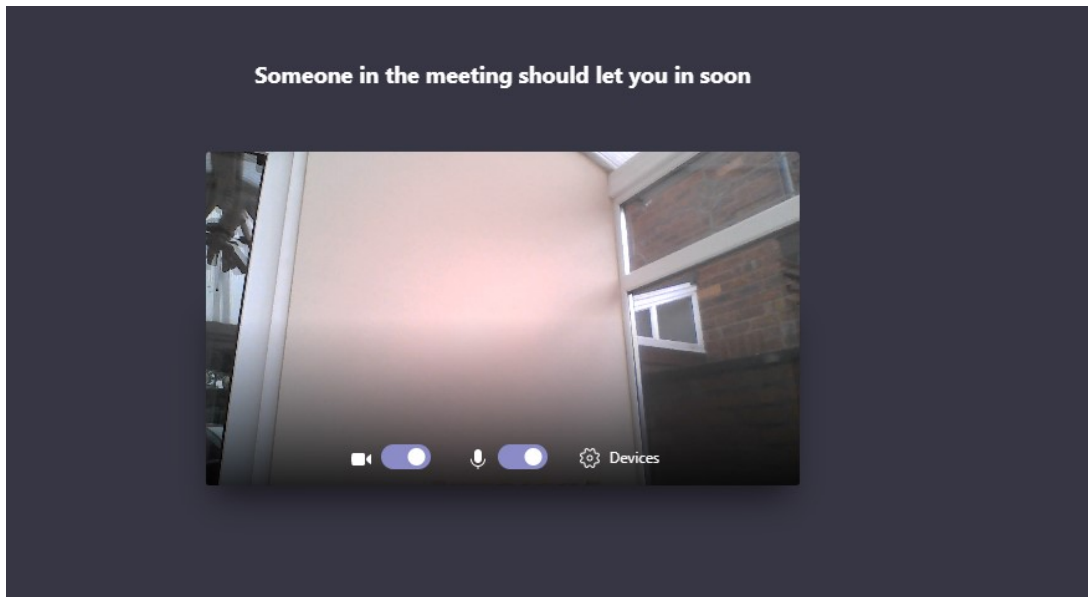
You can adjust the volume of the meeting here

## How to join your interview meeting on your desktop or laptop

▲ **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** – You must have a camera installed on your hardware

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) ← Click on the link that you receive in your interview invitation email





You will then need to wait to be added to the interview meeting by the chair of the panel

▲ **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** - If you are currently an employee of the City of Wolverhampton Council, then you will automatically join the meeting interview

