

Reference Policy



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1. Purpose

This policy outlines Derbyshire County Council's approach to providing employment references for current and past colleagues.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all reference requests for current and past colleagues, except agency workers and teaching and support staff employed by Schools for whom local arrangements apply.

The Council's approach to requesting employment references in respect of new colleagues is included within the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy.



3. Introduction

There is no legal requirement for an employer to provide a reference for a current or past employee. However, there is a general expectation that employers will provide references and it is the Council's policy to provide references on request.

Employment references must be fair and accurate, and the employer can decide what information is provided within the reference.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Human Resources are responsible for:

- Providing references for colleagues in respect of employment history

Managers are responsible for:

- Providing references only in a personal capacity (ie not from a DCC email address or on DCC headed paper)
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5. General Employment Reference Requests

Reference requests for current or past colleagues will be handled by Human Resources Services and it will be the Council's practice to provide a standard reference containing factual information as set out in the attached Appendix A.

This is a minimal reference and sets out the name of the employee, job title, and employment dates. This standard, minimal approach will be:

- Communicated to all colleagues at the outset of employment with Derbyshire County Council;
- Generally applied to all colleagues; and

- used on the basis that a basic reference does not mean that we are not disclosing negative information, where appropriate.

All references will be marked 'private and confidential' to the addressee.

6. Employment References where Safeguarding considerations apply

Reference requests for current or past colleagues in respect of a safeguarding regulated activity role will be handled by Human Resources Services liaising with line managers and it will be the Council's practice to provide a standard reference containing factual information as set out in the attached Appendix B.

7. References from banks, building societies and other potential lenders

Reference request from banks, building societies and other potential lenders and letting agencies should be directed to HR Services for a response, where further details may be added as appropriate such as salary details.

8. Managers requested to provide a reference

Where Managers are asked to provide a reference for present or past colleagues of the Council, a manager may wish to do so but on the understanding that it is in a personal character reference and is in line with the guidance set out in this policy ie is based upon fact and not unsubstantiated opinion. While the referee may state the capacity in which they have knowledge of the subject of the reference, the reference must state that it is made in the referee's personal capacity.

If you are asked to provide a reference in a personal capacity, you must make this clear and not under any circumstances use the Council's email address or headed paper. Failure to comply may result in a disciplinary proceedings.

No liability will attach to the Council if you decide to act in a personal capacity as a personal referee.

9. Retention of references

References issued will be stored on current colleagues' files. For past colleagues, where there is an employment file in existence (in line with the HR Retention Schedule) the reference will be stored on this file. Where an employment file does not exist (in line with the HR Retention Schedule) the reference will be stored for a period of 12 months within an employee reference file.

Appendix A

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear **[NAME]**

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE FOR [STAFF NAME]

Thank you for your recent employment reference request.

I am pleased to confirm details of employment with us as below:

Job Title: **[ROLE]**

Start Date: **[DATE]**

Leaving Date: **[DATE]**

Please note it is our policy to only provide this basic information for employment reference purposes.

In accordance with Derbyshire County Council's normal practice this reference is given in good faith and in confidence.

Yours sincerely

Human Resources Services

Appendix B

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear **[NAME]**

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE FOR [STAFF NAME]

Thank you for your recent employment reference request.

I am pleased to confirm details of employment with us as below:

Job Title: **[ROLE]**
Start Date: **[DATE]**
Leaving Date: **[DATE]**

The Council **[IS/ISNOT]** satisfied with the person's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.

There **[HAVE/HAVE NOT]** been disciplinary proceedings relating to issues which would pose a risk of harm to children or young people or vulnerable adults, in relation to this person while employed by the Council. **[The facts of the case are XXXX]**

Please note it is our policy to only provide this basic information for employment reference purposes.

In accordance with Derbyshire County Council's normal practice this reference is given in good faith and in confidence.

Yours sincerely

Human Resources Services