CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Housing & Customer Services Officer



If you require this information booklet in an alternative format please contact Martin Murphy, Housing & Customer Services Manager at martin.murphy@arkhousing.co.uk or on 02890 752310.

Sept 2024

A Message from the Director of Homes and Communities

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Ark Housing Association as our new Housing & Customer Services Officer.

We have accomplished great things as a registered Housing Association by taking brave strategic decisions to further our social purpose. We are now one of the fastest growing social housing providers across the UK and Ireland, and through our ongoing investment in new homes and services, we continue to reach many more people in need and have a greater positive impact within the communities we operate.

As a result of our recent growth, we are now seeking the appointment of an experienced Housing Officer, who will play a pivotal role in delivering high-quality, efficient, and effective customer centred services to our tenants.

Reporting directly to Housing & Customer Services Manager, you will be responsible for delivering a range of frontline housing management and customer services in accordance with the Associations policies and procedures.

If you feel you are the right person for this role and wish to join a progressive and forward-thinking organisation that makes a lasting difference to people, then we would love to hear from you.

In return, you will be supported by an excellent and highly professional staff team and Board, all committed to delivering Ark Housing's vision.

I look forward to receiving your application.



LAURA O'DOWD
DIRECTOR OF HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

About Ark Housing Association

Ark Housing Association is a registered Housing Association with the Department for Communities and Financial Conduct Authority and is an independent not for profit organisation under the Industrial & Provident Society Act (NI) 1969. We are also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

We were established in 1987 as Down and Connor Housing Association to provide social and affordable homes for people in housing need. In 1999 the organisation was renamed Ark Housing Association to reflect our history and growing ambition.

We are based in Belfast but operate across all district council areas and we build, manage, and maintain homes to meet the needs of a wide range of demographics. In addition to providing homes for general needs families we also provide a range of accommodation and support services to enable people to manage and sustain their tenancies and live independently. All permanent allocations of our homes are made in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme for Northern Ireland which is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

We operate several successful partnerships with specialist agencies and statutory bodies. These include Threshold N.I; Inspire Wellbeing; Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust; Supporting People and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. We also manage a floating support homeless service for families threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

Our new build developments are funded through a combination of private finance with capital funding grants received from the Department for Communities and we are also revenue funded for some specialist services through the Supporting People Programme.

We currently manage over 900 homes, have an active development programme with nearly 300 more currently on site, and we aim to have up to 1,300 homes in management by March 2027. We currently employ 42 permanent and temporary staff across a range of scheme and office-based roles.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

At Ark Housing Association we pride ourselves on being an innovative and progressive organisation. We nurture open and honest internal and external relationships, and we value partnership, collaboration, and professional development. We empower and trust our people to deliver and in return we actively support them through a myriad of forward-thinking policies and practises.

Our vision is:

"Making a positive difference by empowering people and communities".

Our mission is:

"In partnership, provide quality homes and support services to meet housing need and contribute to the wellbeing of communities".

Our core values are:

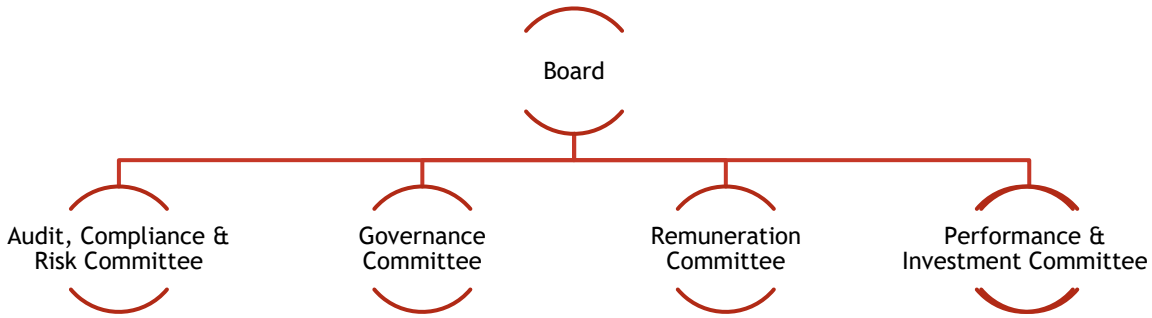
Progressive	*Forward thinking, supporting change and transformational*
Respect	*Treat everyone with dignity and esteem*
Integrity	*Maintain the highest professional and personal standards*
Diversity and Equality	*Value diversity and equality in everything we do*
Excellence	*Strive to deliver the highest standards of quality and customer care.*

Our Governance & Senior Executive Structure

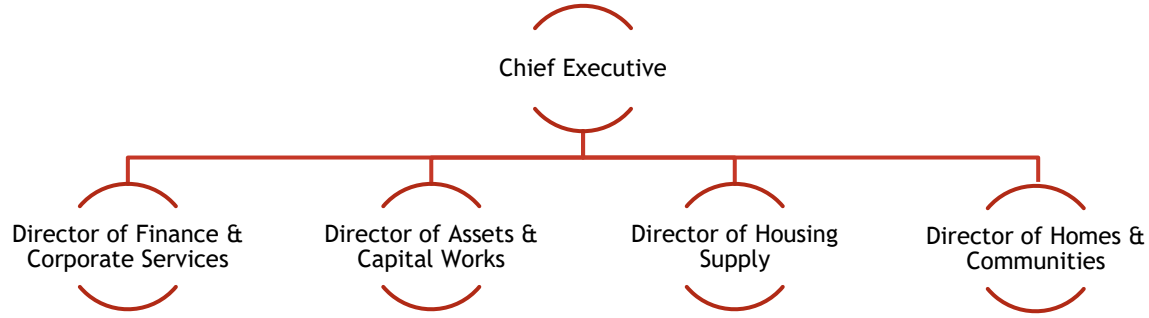
Ark Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Board and its Committees whose role is to lead, direct, and control the work of the Association. The Board ensures the delivery of the organisation's agreed strategic objectives and corporate plans within the framework of statutory and regulatory compliance.

The Board is supported by the Senior Executive Team who is led by the Chief Executive.

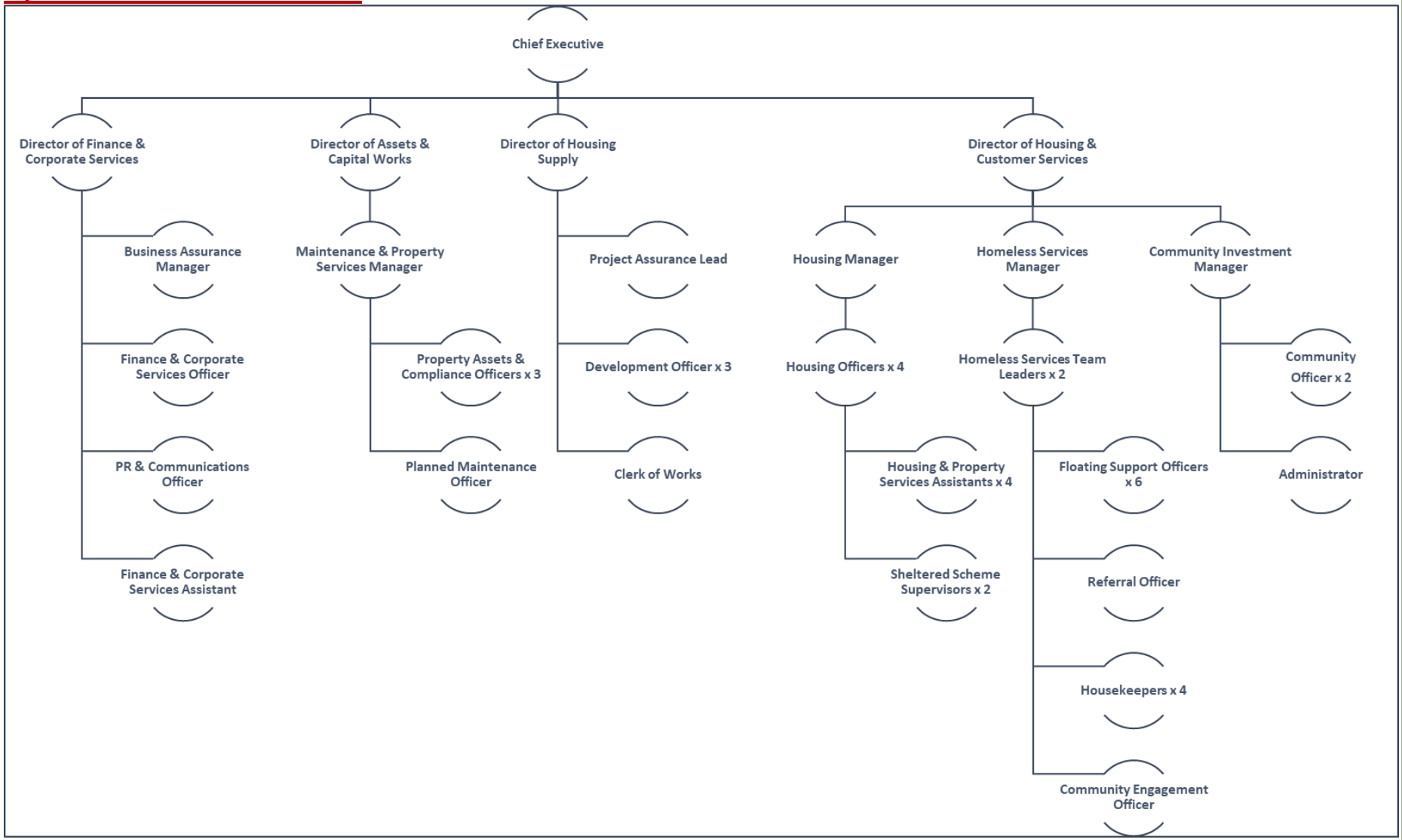
Board & Committee Structure



Senior Executive Team Structure



Operational Staff Structure



About The Role

As Housing & Customer Services Officer, reporting directly to the Housing & Customer Services Manager you will be responsible for delivering a range of frontline housing management and customer services in accordance with the Associations policies and procedures including:

- Housing Allocations
- Income Accounting and Rent Arrears Management
- Anti-social Behaviour Case Management
- Community Liaison and Tenant Participation
- Housing Support Services

Qualifications, Skills & Experience

Applicants must meet one of the following criteria, with relevant housing management experience, preferably in social housing:

- Degree or third-level qualification plus one year's experience;
- CIH Level 3 Qualification in Housing plus one year's experience;
- Level 3 qualification plus two years' experience; or
- 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths, plus three years' experience.

And

- Have a proven track record in successfully developing relationships and partnership working with other agencies to help deal with and resolve tenancy and neighbourhood issues;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Be competent in the use of the Microsoft Office software suite;
- Hold a current valid driving licence and have access to the use of a motor vehicle
- Must be familiar with GDPR requirements and is experienced in providing a confidential service to customers and in managing personal information confidentially

Benefits & Main Terms & Conditions of Employment

Contract:	Permanent (Subject to 6 Month Probationary Period)
Hours:	37 Per Week, Monday & Friday. Due to the nature of the role, you will on occasion be required to work outside normal office hours.
Remuneration:	£35,956-£40,424. (Subject to Review April 2027)

Pension:	NILGOSC contributory pension scheme. Employer contribution is currently 15.5%.
Annual Leave:	22 days annual leave moving to 27 after 5 years' service and 32 days after 10 years' service.
Statutory Leave:	13 customary holidays per annum.
Occupational Sick Pay:	Maximum of 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay. (Depending on length of service).
Other Benefits:	A range of excellent work and family friendly policies, including hybrid working.
	Access to Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme.
	EV Charging Facilities at Head Office with on-site Car Parking.
	Private Medical Insurance
	Essential Car User Allowance & Business Mileage Reimbursement.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	**Housing and Customer Services Officer**
LOCATION:	Head Office, Belfast
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Director of Housing
REPORTING TO:	Housing & Customer Services Manager
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Housing & Property Services Assistants, Scheme Supervisors

JOB PURPOSE:

- To ensure delivery of high-quality customer focused housing management services.
- To provide comprehensive housing and estate management services in accordance with the strategic objectives of Ark Housing.
- To ensure the development and delivery of services within a framework of continuous improvement.

MAIN TASKS:

As Housing & Customer Services Officer, you will be required to contribute to the effective management and delivery of a range of generic frontline housing management and customer services in accordance with the Associations policies and procedures including:

- Housing Allocations
- Income Accounting and Rent Arrears Management
- Anti-social Behaviour Case Management
- Community Liaison and Tenant Participation
- Housing Support Services
- Supervision and Training

The following activities are indicative of, but not exclusively limited to, the duties and responsibilities of the Housing & Customer Services Officer:

Housing Allocations

- Ensuring that all vacant and new build properties are allocated promptly within set timescales and in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme and the Association's published policies and procedures;
- Responding in a timely manner to all written and telephone enquiries from housing applicants and those authorised to act on behalf of housing applicants;

- Ensuring that all applications for transfer and mutual exchange are processed and managed in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme and the Association's published policies and procedures;

- Ensuring that all allocations and transfer records are maintained in accordance with written procedures and that confidentiality and General Data Protection Regulations are adhered to;

Income Accounting and Rent Arrears Management

- Effective management and monitoring of all tenant rent accounts and initiating arrears and debt recovery actions in accordance with the Associations income management policies and procedures;

- Monitoring of tenant rent accounts on a weekly basis, providing reports to the relevant Manager in respect to individual cases and arrears key performance indicators;

- Maintaining high-quality rent account and arrears actions within the association's integrated housing system (SDM)

- Preparing debt cases for legal action including small claims court processes, repossessions cases, and attendance at court where required;

- Ensuring effective recovery action is taken on all past tenant debtors;

- Ensuring high-quality information, advice and support is provided to tenants in arrears;

Anti-Social Behaviour Case Management

- Taking a proactive and leading role in the management and prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour;

- Ensuring the enforcement of tenancy agreement responsibilities and taking timely and appropriate action in relation to tenancy breaches linked to reports of Anti-social Behaviour;

- Maintaining robust case records and attending court hearings where required;

- Liaising effectively, and building good relations with, all external statutory agencies in the management of Anti-social Behaviour;

Community Liaison and Tenant Participation

- Ensuring that all agreed tenant participation and community engagement activities are delivered in accordance with the Association's Tenant Participation Strategy & Action Plan;

- Attend all resident and tenant group meetings as required and to support the Community Investment Manager in the preparation and delivery of all tenant and public consultation exercises;

- Support the development of tenant and community groups and forums, and provide assistance and support to those groups where required;

Housing Support Services

- Ensure the delivery of high-quality support services to sheltered housing clients in conjunction with sheltered scheme supervisors;

- Undertake regular supervision and performance coaching discussions with sheltered scheme supervisors

- Ensure that weekly and monthly records in respect to health and fire safety are completed and recorded by scheme supervisors

- To review support needs assessments and interventions programmes in line with best practise, supporting people requirements and the Association's policies and procedures;

- Undertake quality assurance audits in respect to maintaining high standards of support across sheltered housing services;

Supervision and Training

- Attend regular supervision and performance coaching discussions with the relevant Manager

- Participate in any internal and external personal development training/learning being provided or recommended by the relevant Manager

Other Duties

- The post holder shall be required to represent the organisation in a positive and professional manner at all times.

- The post holder will be required to liaise closely with the Property Services team in relation to maintenance or environmental issues identified at schemes/properties.

- Attendance at conference events, seminars, meetings and training sessions may be required on occasion outside of normal working hours.

- The post holder may be required on occasion to be involved in internal working groups or teams in the development of new departmental initiatives, public relations activities or in the development of organisation or service-related literature.

- The postholder may at times be required to undertake a range of cross departmental and generic activities related to their area of responsibility, and behalf of the association where required, in the event of staff absences, shortages and as directed by the relevant Manager

This job description is not exhaustive and only highlights the key areas and tasks associated with this post. It cannot be prescriptive, and it is a requirement of post holder that there exists high levels of flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of the organisational and service demands.

Housing & Customer Services Officer (Personnel Specification)

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	DESIRABLE CRITERIA
Educational Attainment (Must Demonstrate on Application) & Relevant Experience	**Applicants must meet one of the following criteria, with relevant housing management experience, preferably in social housing:** • Degree or third-level qualification plus one year's experience; • CIH Level 3 Qualification in Housing plus one year's experience; • Level 3 qualification plus two years' experience; or • 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths, plus three years' experience. **And** • Have a proven track record in successfully developing relationships and partnership working with other agencies to help deal with and resolve tenancy and neighbourhood issues;	Relevant CIH Housing Qualification Professional Membership of a relevant body Have a minimum of 3 years' housing management experience within the last 5yrs in incorporating at least three of the following service areas: • Allocations / Voids Management • Anti-social Behaviour • Community Engagement and Tenant Participation • Rent Account & Arrears Management
ICT Skills (Must Demonstrate on Application)	Must have previous experience of using an Integrated Housing Management Software Package and be competent in the use of MS Office applications.	Experience in the specific use of HMS (or equivalent housing waiting list system)
Transport (Must Demonstrate on Application)	Must hold a valid driving license & have access to a car for business purposes for use in the fulfilment of the role.	
Data Protection	Be familiar with the requirements of the general data Protection Regulations	

	and is experienced in providing a confidential service to customers and in managing their personal information in a confidential manner.	
PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS (TESTED AT INTERVIEW)		
Embracing Change	Contributes positively to change and recognises the positive impact of change on individuals and the team. Is flexible and positively accepts change.	
Equality	Treats all colleagues and customers fairly and equitably and demonstrates respect for diversity.	
Team Working, Communicating & Influencing	Breaks down barriers that impact effective team working. Optimises the use of the pool of knowledge and embraces a learning culture. Has effective interpersonal communication skills and experience of report writing	
Customer Focus	Applies a professional approach to ensuring good customer service.	

Selection Timetable

The closing date for completed applications is **12noon on Friday 11th December 2026**. Applications should be sent by email to: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk

Responses will only be accepted on the relevant application form. **Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**

Successful applicants will be invited for interview week commencing 14th December 2026(subject to confirmation). Further details will be provided to those candidates invited to participate in this stage of the process.

In the event that a candidate is invited to interview but is unavailable on the proposed date and time due to reasons beyond their control, the panel may endeavour to accommodate an alternative arrangement subject to their own availability, although this may not be possible and is not guaranteed unless an adjustment is required in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Demonstration of Competencies

Candidates will be required to demonstrate during the selection and assessment process that they satisfy the core requirements of the post as set out in the job description and person specification.

Guidance Notes on Completing Your Application Form

It is important that you read these notes carefully before you complete the application form.

Job Description and Personnel Specification

The Job Description and Personnel Specification will assist you in deciding whether you meet the minimum essential criteria for this position. Please remember that the Association reserves the right to increase the criteria used for the short listing of candidates to be selected for interview without further notification.

You should use the job description and personnel specification to help you consider your relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities and ensure that you outline how you meet those requirements when completing the relevant section of the application.

Short Listing Candidates

Candidates will be selected solely on the information provided in the application form therefore you should ensure that you answer all sections fully and address all essential and desirable criteria where possible.

Confidential Equality Monitoring Form

To comply with our obligations under Equal Opportunities and Fair Employment legislation we are required to monitor our recruitment exercises in order to ensure that our recruitment policies and procedures are effective. All applicants are

therefore required to complete the Equal Opportunities Form associated with this application.

You should ensure that you complete the Equality Form and return it in a separate envelope addressed to the Equality Officer and marked Private & Confidential or by email along with your completed application form to: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk

We will not use data from our equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the selection process.

Supporting Documents

Documentary evidence will be required if you are shortlisted to attend for interview. This will include photographic identification e.g. passport, driving license or other form of acceptable ID.

Copies of your educational qualifications, professional membership and any other documents required to support your application will also be required. You may bring these documents to the office with you on the day of your interview and staff will arrange to copy them for you. Please note that all documents provided must be original.

Disclosure of Criminal Records

All applicants must complete this section of the form fully and where criminal convictions are disclosed details must be provided of the offence(s) of which the applicant has been convicted and any relevant details relating to the offences.

You should note that Ark Housing are required to carry out checks on all people being considered for employment with the Association through the Access NI scheme.

Data Protection

All information provided by applicants will be used solely for the purposes for which it is required in this recruitment exercise and will not be disclosed to others except where we are obliged to do so in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Equality of Opportunity

Ark Housing is an Equal Opportunities Employer, and we welcome applications from all sections of our community. Arrangements can be made for those applicants who require additional support or assistance because of a disability or other consideration which may hinder them in this application process. If you require such assistance, please contact Martin Murphy at this office on Tel: 028 90 752310 or Email: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk

General Points

The application form, if completed by hand, should be completed in **black ink** and must be legible. If submitted by post, please make sure that you leave plenty of time for your application to be received by the closing date & time. Please remember that **late applications will not be accepted**.

Ensure that you have signed and dated the application form. Electronic signatories are acceptable on emailed applications.

Do not send any supporting documentation with this application form. We may ask for such documents if your application is successful, and you are shortlisted for interview.

Please ensure that you have the permission of your nominated referees to act on your behalf and that they agree to provide you with a reference.

Canvassing on behalf of your application will disqualify your application.