

PUBLIC PRACTICE

GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORITIES

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ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

WHO CAN HOST A PLACEMENT?

Public Practice invites Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from public organisations that are:

- Local or city authorities
- Combined authorities
- Groups of more than one authority
- Development corporations
- Publicly led delivery vehicles
- Hospitals or other public bodies

CAN WE APPLY TO HOST MORE THAN ONE PLACEMENT?

Yes, Authorities are welcome to apply to host more than one placement. A separate Expression of Interest form should be submitted for each different post.

WHERE ARE PLACEMENTS LOCATED?

Currently placements are focused on Authorities and public organisations in London, the South East and East of England, as all placements need to be within commuting distance of each other.

CAN WE APPLY TO HOST A PLACEMENT IF WE ARE LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE SOUTH EAST AND EAST OF ENGLAND?

No, we will not be accepting EOIs for placements outside the South East and East of England in this recruitment round. However, Public Practice will be expanding to a wider geography in the near future, subject to demand, and encourage Authorities in other regions to contact us to express any interest.

CAN WE APPLY TO HOST A PLACEMENT STARTING ON A DIFFERENT DATE?

Public Practice offers two intakes for placements each year, one in the spring and the other in the autumn but is also developing alternative programme offers. Authorities for whom the programme dates are not workable are encouraged to contact Public Practice.

WHAT FUNDING AND APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED TO BE ABLE TO HOST A PLACEMENT?

To host a placement, you must:

- Be able to secure funding and HR approvals for a 12-month placement starting on the date of the cohort you are applying for (1 April or 1 October).
- Be in a position to provide the selected Associate a formal job offer and sign an employment contract a month before the Associate is due to start in post.

FUNDING AND FEES

HOW ARE POSTS FUNDED?

Typically, funding for placements is secured from a variety of sources:

- Budget growth / restructures
- Insourcing services
- Internal / external recharging
- Uplift in planning fees
- Planning Performance Agreement fees
- Design Review fees

- [This funding database](#), maintained by Public Practice, is for use by local authority officers who are looking for a quick way of reviewing the latest funding opportunities to consider applying for.

IS THERE A SALARY RANGE?

Public Practice will recruit to roles with a full-time-equivalent salary range of £30k - £70k. The salary will depend on the grading of the role and on the skills and experience of the Associate.

HOW MUCH IS THE PLACEMENT FEE?

Upon entering into a contract with an Associate, your Authority will be asked to pay a placement fee to Public Practice. The placement fee is:

- £5,000 (+VAT) for a 12-month placement
- £7,000 (+VAT) for a placement lasting longer than 12-months

IS THERE AN ADDITIONAL FEE IF WE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE ASSOCIATE ON BEYOND THE END OF THEIR AGREED CONTRACT?

Authorities can agree to extend the contract with their Associates at the end of the original term. There is no additional fee if the Authority wishes to extend or offer Associates a permanent contract at the end of the agreed contract period.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

HOW CAN MY AUTHORITY EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN HOSTING A PLACEMENT?

We ask you to [book a call here](#) with us to discuss any roles before submitting an Expression of Interest to help us to understand the skills and expertise you need and the likely fit with candidates' expertise and salary expectations. Expressions of Interest should then be made by completing a [Word document](#) found on our website and emailing this to us.

WHAT TYPE OF SPECIALISMS CAN WE RECRUIT?

We recruit candidates from across the full spectrum of built environment and placemaking backgrounds, from design to development to delivery. We break these down into [12 specific types](#):

- Architecture, Urban Design & Masterplanning
- Community Engagement & Participation
- Conservation & Heritage
- Development & Capital Delivery
- Digital & Data
- Ecology & Biodiversity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Infrastructure & Utilities
- Landscape Architecture
- Planning & Policy
- Regeneration & Economic Development
- Transport & Mobility

WHAT SORT OF ROLES CAN BE PUT FORWARD AS PLACEMENTS?

Placements should ideally be place-based - for example centred on a particular town centre or growth area - or project based - for example working on the production of a policy document or guidance - and have opportunity for cross-cutting work across teams. Examples of past and current placements are provided on the [cohort section](#) of our website

HOW ARE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ASSESSED?

Expressions of Interest are assessed and selected based on four criteria:

- THE ROLE: the extent to which the placement role and ambitions of the Authority are aligned with the mission and values of Public Practice.
- MAKING AN IMPACT: the extent to which the placement will shape healthier, sustainable, more equitable places, through a set of clearly defined roles and deliverables.
- BUILDING CAPACITY: the extent to which the placement role will allow the Authority to build planning capacity within the organisation and explore new ways of working by bringing in additional skills and expertise. Preference will be given to new types of roles over pre-existing roles or vacancies.
- DELIVERABILITY: the likelihood that necessary funding and approvals will be secured in time to employ and onboard the selected Associate for the start of the programme and the right conditions within the team to ensure the placement will be a success.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS IF OUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IS SUCCESSFUL?

Upon your Expression of Interest being shortlisted for matching with an Associate, you will be required to:

- Work with your named HR officer: On the Expression of Interest form, you are asked to provide the details of the HR officer who is supporting the placement. Public Practice will contact the named HR officer with guidance regarding the recruitment and employment of Associates to support the recruitment process.
- Attend a placement workshop: All shortlisted Authorities are asked to participate in a day-long online placement workshop via Zoom or similar video conferencing platform to contribute to the assessment and matching of Associates. We expect that one placement workshop is attended by either the officer submitting the Expression of Interest or the placement line manager.

WHAT IS OUR HR DEPARTMENT HAS ANY QUERIES ABOUT THE PROGRAMME?

We ask them to [book a call here](#) with us and we can present an overview of the recruitment, selection and matching processes and the overall programme to them, via Zoom or MS Teams.

SELECTION OF ASSOCIATES

HOW DOES THE ASSOCIATE SELECTION PROCESS WORK?

Associates undergo a rigorous two stage selection process before being matched to Authorities:

- Stage One - Online applications: To apply for an Associate position with Public Practice, Applicants must first submit an online application. The application focuses on the skills they will bring to the Authority they are placed in, the track record of Applicants and their motivation and ambitions for working in local government.
- Stage Two - Placement workshop: The second round of the selection process is an all-day online assessment, focussed on further testing the skills and experience of the Applicants, whilst also considering the most suitable roles for each. Applicants have a 45-minute public-sector-style panel interview and complete a range of activities, including a presentation and a group exercise.

WHO ASSESSES APPLICATIONS AND APPLICANTS FOR ASSOCIATE POSITIONS?

The assessment of Applicants at the online application stage is supported by a group of around 70+ expert assessors. Our expert assessors are experienced public sector placemaking practitioners. At online placement workshops, you will contribute to the assessment of Applicants. At least one officer from all shortlisted Authorities will be expected to participate in one of the placement workshops. Should you wish to become one of our specialist Assessors please contact info@publicpractice.org.uk.

WHAT ABOUT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

Increased diversity of individuals taking up roles and working in public planning is a key outcome for Public Practice. We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) through our application, selection and matching process for Associate positions. Our approach is to recognise underrepresented characteristics and take proportionate action to support individuals with those characteristics to successfully apply for the programme. Please contact [Public Practice](#) if you would like more details about the strategies adopted to promote EDI in Associate applications.

MATCHING

HOW DOES MATCHING WORK?

Public Practice takes the skills, experience, personal qualities and preferences of Associates into account when matching Associates and Authorities. Following the online placement workshops, Public Practice will recommend a match with the Associate we feel is most suitable for the role.

WILL WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE ASSOCIATE WITH WHOM WE ARE MATCHED?

When you receive a proposed match, you will be provided with an Associate Pack containing information on the proposed Associate, including: a bio, CV and work sample. You will then be asked to meet your proposed Associate before confirming whether you would like them to be placed with you.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PROPOSED MATCH IS NOT SUITABLE?

Should you consider that the proposed Associate does not fit the role or your organisation after meeting them, you will have the opportunity to decline the Associate. In this case, Public Practice will endeavour to re-match you with another Associate based on your feedback.

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN ASSOCIATE DOES NOT WANT TO BE PLACED WITH US?

Where an Associate does not feel the placement is suitable, Public Practice will endeavour to find another suitable Associate.

ONBOARDING

HOW ARE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYED?

Associates are employed by their host Authorities for 12 months or longer. You will be expected to provide the Associate with an employment contract in the same way you would any other employee. Most Associates are employed by Authorities on fixed-term contracts, though some Associates may wish to join you as a secondment from their

existing employer. We are also open to Authorities employing Associates as permanent employees if it is preferable for both parties. We do not accept Associates being employed as contractors or via agencies.

WHAT ARE THE PAY ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSOCIATES?

As the Associate's employer or secondment host, your organisation will pay the Associate directly or through their existing employer. The Expression of Interest form asks for an expected salary range, and Associates will also provide their current salary in their applications to Public Practice. When matches are proposed, Public Practice will share salary information with both parties. The final pay arrangements are to be negotiated between you and the Associate.

WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS AROUND WORKING HOURS FOR ASSOCIATES?

As the Associate's employer, you will need to discuss and decide on the Associate's working arrangements with them. Public Practice is open to Associates being full-time or part-time, or having other flexible working arrangements, such as compressed hours. The only stipulation from Public Practice is that 10% of their time in post is spent attending a learning and development course led by Public Practice, and that the Associate's overall time commitment is a minimum of 3 days per week.

WHAT PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS DO WE HAVE TO CARRY OUT FOR ASSOCIATES?

You should follow your normal procedures with regards to pre-employment checks when taking on an Associate. Public Practice does not conduct pre-employment checks on behalf of Authorities.

WHAT WILL OUR RELATIONSHIP BE WITH PUBLIC PRACTICE?

Public Practice acts as a broker, finding Associates to fulfil roles within host Authorities. Public Practice also delivers an L&D programme to Associates to support them transition into their new roles in the public sector. You will be asked to sign a Placement Agreement with Public Practice. The agreement sets out the terms of the relationship between your Authority and Public Practice.

WHAT ONBOARDING PROCEDURES ARE THERE?

Public Practice will offer an onboarding call with you before the placement begins to outline the programme and understand your expectations for the year ahead as an Associate's line manager. Public Practice will also provide line managers a written guidance document.

At the start of the placement, Public Practice will arrange a lunch-time welcoming session for all line managers and placement hosts. In the same week a longer multi-day induction will be given to Associates preparing them for their placement and our programme.

ONCE IN PLACEMENT

WHAT PERFORMANCE REVIEW MECHANISMS DOES PUBLIC PRACTICE USE FOR ASSOCIATES?

You will be expected to use your own internal performance review processes to monitor the performance of Associates whilst they are on placement. Public Practice will provide Authorities with a regular opportunity to book a call in with a member of the team at any point during the placement if there are any issues to discuss.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE WANT TO TERMINATE THE CONTRACT OF THE ASSOCIATE BEFORE THE END OF THE PLACEMENT?

If, for any reason, you conclude that the performance of the Associate is unacceptable, we ask that you let us know as soon as possible before taking any action. Public Practice will work with you to attempt to address any problems and support with any sourcing of alternative Associates if the situation allows.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE ASSOCIATE CANNOT OR DOES NOT WISH TO COMPLETE THEIR PLACEMENT?

In the unlikely event that an Associate cannot complete the full placement, Public Practice will seek to replace the Associate if the situation allows.

WHAT HAPPENS BEYOND THE END OF THE 12-MONTHS?

The Public Practice programme runs for 12 months. If an Associate is employed for a longer period than the 12 months, they will continue in their placement at their host Authority but will no longer be required to attend the learning and development course run by Public Practice (10% of the contracted hours).

L&D PROGRAMME

HOW DOES THE L&D PROGRAMME WORK?

Associates spend 90% of their time at the host Authority and 10% participating in a learning and development course. For full-time Associates, this will involve attending fortnightly day-long sessions on Fridays led by Public Practice, with breaks in August and around the New Year.

CAN MY TEAM PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAMME?

Authority officers are invited to participate in the programme in the following ways:

- Working Groups: We host officer Working Groups every 2-months on Fridays, These are practical spaces for troubleshooting shared issues and developing forms of practice. Officers will have the opportunity to attend these groups.
- Authority hosted days: Your Authority may be invited to host a training day over the course of the year. These in-person days are opportunities for the cohort to learn about your Authority, and for your staff to also take part in the learning and development sessions.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENS AND HOW WE CAN GET INVOLVED?

Monthly emails to all Authority line managers will keep officers informed of activities taking place and will share information about ways of participating.

FURTHER INFORMATION

info@publicpractice.org.uk

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