COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Virtual Interviews
Advice for Candidates

The purpose of this document is to help prepare candidates for their virtual online interview. It will outline the simple steps that need to be taken ahead of your interview to ensure everything runs smoothly and you make the most of the opportunity.

Please remember that, although we will provide some assistance, the responsibility lies with the candidate to ensure they are fully set up for their interview.

TECHNOLOGY

For your virtual interview to proceed, you will need three essential elements working together:

- **Hardware:** A laptop or desktop device with a camera and microphone.
- **Internet Connection:** A fast, reliable internet connection.
- **Software:** Video conferencing software - Microsoft Teams.

Hardware:
You may use a tablet for your interview, but we recommend a desktop computer or laptop for the best experience.

Most devices now include a front-facing camera and microphone as standard but older devices may require a separate camera and microphone.

Please make sure your device, camera and microphone are all in working order and fully charged before your interview.

Internet Connection:
Virtual interviews require a strong, stable internet connection with bandwidth speed of at least 1 megabits per second.

Software:
To allow for an online interview "meeting" request to be issued you are required to download the Microsoft Teams app onto your preferred electronic device. If you are downloading the app to a PC, you should ensure that your PC has both video and microphone capability. The use of headphones is highly recommended for participants, as it reduces any potential sound issues. You do not need to set up a Microsoft account to download the teams app or to participate in the meeting.

Accept Invitation:
Candidates are required to accept the online invitation to ensure that they can join the interview. Once you have accepted the invitation it should appear in your online calendar. Please accept the invitation on the device you will be using for the interview.

The settings on the device must be set to
(UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Practice Makes Perfect:
It is strongly recommended that you test all three elements of the technology working together before your interview.

Schedule a meeting online with a family member, friend or colleague a few days before your interview.

This will allow you to gain familiarity and confidence using video conferencing technology. Our Recruitment Team are also available to schedule a test with you.

This will give you an opportunity to identify and rectify any issues which may affect your interview.

Prepare your setting:
After testing your technology, you will need to give some thought to the setting where the interview will take place.

We strongly recommend that you choose a quiet, private location where you won't be disturbed for the duration of your interview.

The use of headphones is highly recommended for participants, as it reduces any potential sound issues.

In addition to privacy, lighting is also very important. If possible, use a location with natural lighting.

Experts recommend that you should sit facing the light to avoid creating shadows across your face. Please note that if you are wearing glasses this may cause a glare effect.

Furthermore, try to choose a simple, neutral background for your interview which isn't distracting. If this is not possible, most video conference applications have built-in backgrounds that you can use.

Lastly, raise the camera close to eye-level. Ideally, you should aim to capture your head and shoulders on the screen without getting too close the camera.

PREPARING YOURSELF

On the day, it is important that you prepare for a virtual interview as you would for any other interview.

- Dress as you would for a face-to-face interview.

- Mobile phones and other devices should be on silent. Do not accept any calls unless you are contacted by our Recruitment Team regarding your interview.

- The recording of interviews is not permitted.

- Candidates are not permitted to use notes as a guide during their interview. The only documentation that a candidate can refer to during the interview is a "clean" or unmarked copy of their application form.

- Switch off other applications on your computer as they may distract you.

- Have a glass of water at your desk, should you need it!

- Please log into the "meeting" 5 minutes in advance of the interview to avoid delays to the interview schedule. The interview board will join the "meeting" when they are ready to commence the interview. Be patient, this may take a few moments, don't panic.

- The Chairperson will
    - confirm your identity
    - introduce the board members and the format of the interview
    - confirm that everyone can see and hear each other
    - formally start and end interview

- If the candidate does not present for interview five minutes after scheduled interview time it will be deemed a "no show". If you experience problems with screen or audio, please let the board know immediately. We will try to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

- Make sure your speaker isn't on mute. You should not use the mute option during the interview.

- Speak clearly and slowly at a regular volume.

- Take into account there may be a slight time delay, wait for the interviewer to finish asking the question before answering.

- Eye contact in an in-person interview is very important and difficult to achieve the same connection via video.

- Don't be afraid to look at the camera when speaking. Your eyes are more likely to align with the interviewers on the other end. When listening, look at the screen or the camera.

- Please remember that the Recruitment Team are available to support you and please let us know as soon as possible if you experience technical glitches.
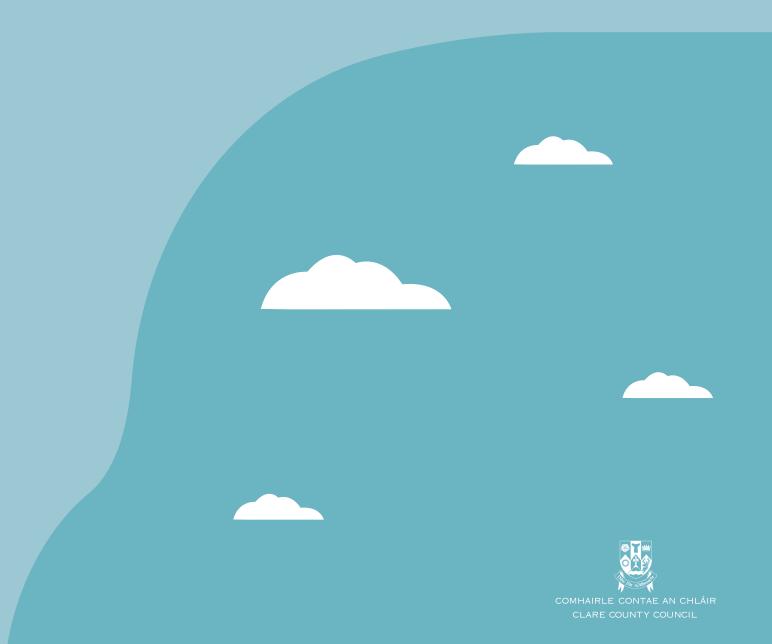
POST-INTERVIEW

When the chairperson advises that the interview has concluded please ensure to disconnect from the call completely. You should close out of the software application fully and close it down completely.

CANVASSING

Any attempt by a candidate himself/herself, or by any person(s) acting at his/her instigation, directly or indirectly by means or written communication or otherwise, to canvas or otherwise influence in the candidate's favour, any member of the staff of the County Council, or person nominated by the County Council to interview or examine applicants will automatically disqualify the candidate for the position he/she is seeking.

Thank you for applying to work in Clare County Council and best of luck with your interview.