

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Assistant Director of Human Resources

Prepared for London Boroughs of Richmond & Wandsworth

October 2025



Penna

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Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Firstly, I am delighted that you are considering the role of Assistant Director of Human Resources for Richmond and Wandsworth Councils, and that our advert has piqued your interest. Together, these two boroughs are at an exciting point in their journey – combining ambition, innovation, and a deep commitment to our communities. Under the Better Services Partnership, we've brought together a shared workforce, and we are determined to build an organisation that is lean, digital, purposeful, and relentlessly focused on outcomes.

Our vision for HR is ambitious. We want a centre of excellence that goes far beyond transactional support – one that anticipates the needs of our workforce, empowers our managers, digitises beyond the 'norm', and drives strategic insight across the workforce. This is a role for someone who is not afraid to disrupt, challenge traditional ways of working, and bring people along on a journey of transformation. You will have the opportunity to reimagine how HR operates, harness digital innovation, simplify processes, and embed an agile, forward-looking approach that enables our staff and services to thrive.

I am looking for a leader who combines credibility and curiosity with creativity and courage – someone who can think well beyond the typical, translate strategy into action, and inspire teams to achieve more than they ever imagined possible. If you are an HR professional who thrives on shaping change, driving performance, and making a real difference in public service, this is a role where you can leave a lasting impact.

In turn for all this, I will unlock blockages for you to operate freely to achieve the vision, I will 'have your back' and will support you at every turn and I will also provide you with the resources to do what is necessary. You will be working alongside a brilliant Directorate Leadership Team, with a credible Assistant Director of OD and I envisage these two roles across the HR and OD disciplines will be a powerhouse of change, together.

I hope this brief introduction gives you a sense of the scale, ambition, and opportunity at Richmond and Wandsworth. We are seeking someone exceptional, and I very much look forward to learning how your vision, skills, and experience can help shape the future of HR for Richmond and Wandsworth.

With best regards,

Sam Olsen
Executive Director of Change and Innovation
Richmond & Wandsworth Councils

Advertisement

Assistant Director of Human Resources
Richmond & Wandsworth Councils
Salary up to £116,847

Lead a Strategic Transformation of People, Culture and Capability

Richmond and Wandsworth are two of London's most dynamic and diverse boroughs – places with strong identities, ambitious agendas and a shared determination to deliver outstanding outcomes for their communities. Under our Better Services Partnership, we have brought together our workforces to create a single, collaborative organisation with the scale, influence and ambition to drive real change. Together, we're designing a future-focused organisation – one that's agile, innovative and equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

This is a defining leadership opportunity at the centre of our transformation. As our Assistant Director of Human Resources, you will lead the development of a centre of HR excellence that underpins our organisational effectiveness and accelerates our ambition. Working across both councils, you will shape a modern, forward-looking HR service that is strategic, proactive and outcome focused. From embedding digital enablement and designing seamless self-service solutions, to ensuring our strategic advice is insightful, influential and trusted, you will ensure HR is a true enabler of change and improvement.

We are seeking an accomplished and credible HR leader – someone with the professional authority, vision and curiosity to reimagine what excellent people services look like in a modern local government context. You will be more than the organisation's senior HR counsel: you will be a transformational leader, able to anticipate future workforce challenges, redesign services around business needs, and create a culture of continuous learning, innovation and high performance. Championing CIPD professional standards and investing in the growth of capability across the HR function will be central to your success.

Why Richmond & Wandsworth?

- **Scale and impact:** Lead a workforce of over 3,000 people delivering vital services to hundreds of thousands of residents.
- **A platform for innovation:** Shape a centre of excellence that sets new standards in public sector people leadership.
- **Values-driven culture:** Join an organisation that thinks bigger, embraces difference, connects better, leads by example and always puts people first.

If you are motivated by the opportunity to lead large-scale transformation, deliver lasting organisational impact, and shape the future of two ambitious London boroughs, we look forward to hearing from you via our recruitment partner, Penna.

[Assistant Director of Human Resources](#)

- Tom Niven on 07860 657044 or email: tom.niven@penna.com
- Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com
- James Miller on 07701233159 or email: james.miller@penna.com

Closing date: 11:59pm, 2nd November 2025

Assessment & Interview dates: w/c 10th November 2025

Job Description & Person Specification

Job Description

Job Title: Assistant Director of Human Resources	Grade: MG4
Section: Human Resources	Directorate: Change and Innovation
Responsible to following manager: Executive Director of Change and Innovation	Responsible for following staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head of Business Partnering• Head of Payroll, Transactions and Payments• Head of HR Systems and Management Information
Post Number/s: RWRHR071	Last review date: October 2025

Working for the Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership

This role is employed under the Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership. The overall purpose of Richmond & Wandsworth is to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest attainable cost.

Staff are expected to deliver high quality and responsive services wherever they are based, as well as having the ability to adapt to sometimes differing processes and expectations.

Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership aims to be at the forefront of innovation in local government and the organisation will invest in the development of its staff and ensure the opportunities for progression that only a large organisation can provide.

Job Purpose

The postholder will be responsible for the provision of best in class HR services to the Councils and a resilient and professional payroll service for the Better Services Partnership and other bodies.

As Assistant Director, the postholder will also be responsible for ensuring the development of the Councils' HR service and employment policies, ensuring at all times these follow best practice and all legal requirements, and providing advice to senior management and Members as required.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

- To manage the HR service and staffing complement, providing professional advice to both Councils and directly delivering HR services to all Directorates
- To have overall responsibility, via a management team, for the following functions:
 - HR business partnering and caseload management
 - Occupational health
 - Strategic resourcing and talent acquisition management
 - The payroll and payments function
 - The HR system and related management information
- To ensure that both Councils' recruitment approaches are class leading and designed to attract the widest possible range of high calibre candidates
- To oversee and operate in conjunction with the Assistant Director Financial Services both Councils' early retirement and severance arrangements
- To work collaboratively with the Assistant Director Organisational Development
- To provide advice on all employee relations matters and to represent the Councils at Employment Tribunals, as necessary
- To ensure both Councils have a positive employee relations climate with a strong culture of employee engagement and constructive relationships with recognised Trades Unions
- To oversee all organisation reviews in both Councils and their impact working closely with Directors and other senior managers as required
- To be responsible for overall budget management for the service
- Ensure the provision at all times of an accurate and resilient payroll service, delivering on all related deadlines
- Ensure the provision of relevant, timely, accurate and accessible HR management information to aid strategic and other decision making.

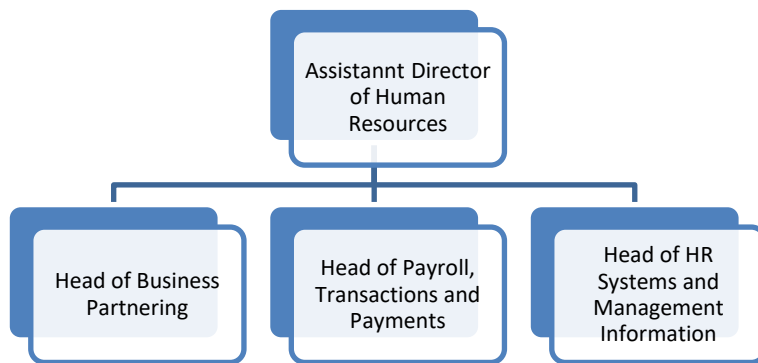
Generic Duties and Responsibilities

- To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond
- To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection and health and safety
- To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the Better Service Partnerships policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability and legal compliance of information and systems
- To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected
- To understand both Councils' duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the council
- The profile is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the duties the post holder will carry out. Other reasonable duties commensurate with the level of the post, including supporting emergency and priority situations, will form part of the role.

Additional Information

- The SSA comprises over 3,000 staff

Team structure



Person Specification

Our Values

THINK BIGGER

EMBRACE DIFFERENCE

CONNECT BETTER

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Our Values are embedded across Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership and throughout all roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organisation. Please [familiarise yourself with our values](#) as they are an integral part of our recruitment and selection process.

Person Specification Requirements		Assessed by A/I/T/C (see below for explanation)
Knowledge	Essential	Assessed
Sound working knowledge of employment law and employment practice matters and related issues	Yes	A/I/T
Strong understanding of the current context of local government service delivery and related challenges in local government and the wider public sector	Yes	A/I/T
Experience	Essential	Assessed
Proven senior leadership experience of HR services in the public sector, including leading cross-functional teams, managing budgets and leading, developing and implementing people strategies	Yes	A/I/T
Proven experience of dealing with workforce and employee relations issues, including advising at the most senior level, and managing complex ET cases	Yes	A/I/T
Proven experience of leading change and transformation in complex organisations	Yes	A/I/T
Skills	Essential	Assessed
Ability to collaborate with all levels and with multiple stakeholders and partners, and communicate clearly and effectively	Yes	I/T
Ability to operate astutely in a political environment, and evidence of working in a trade union environment	Yes	A/I/T
Ability to analyse complex problems and develop effective solutions	Yes	I/T
Highly developed and persuasive influencing, negotiating and interpersonal skills to influence decision-makers and stakeholders at the highest level	Yes	A/I/T
Ability to foster a climate of determination and creativity, to address challenges, achieve continuous improvement and resolve problems	Yes	I/T
Qualifications	Essential	Assessed
Degree and/or management qualification equivalent or relevant equivalent experience	Yes	A
Evidence of commitment to Continued Professional Development	Yes	A

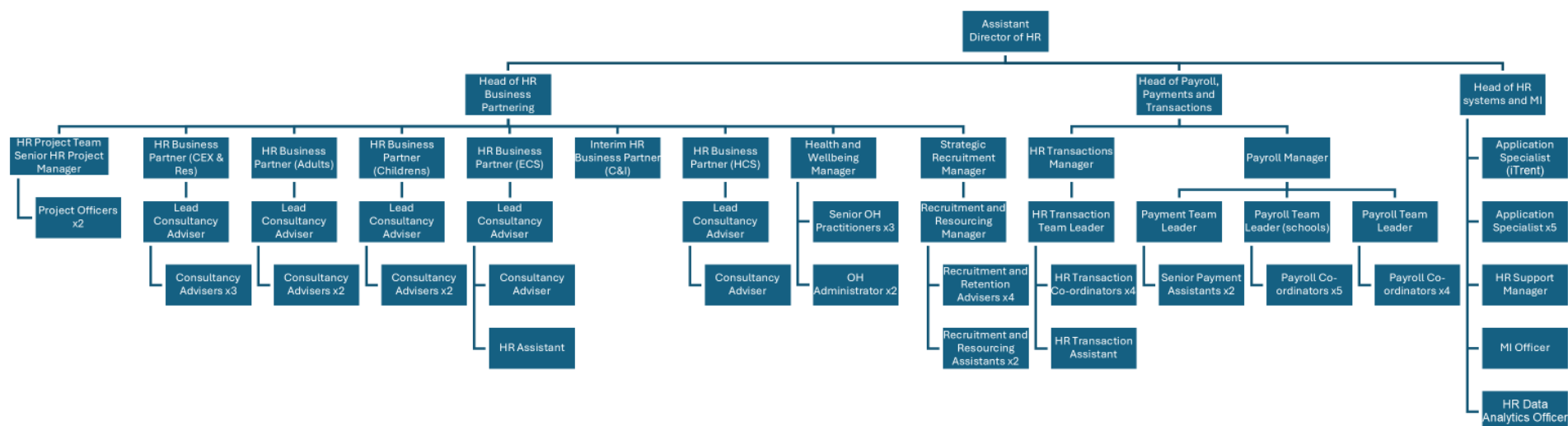
A - Application form / CV

I - Interview

T - Test



Current Structure



How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and supporting statement (no more than two sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.
- Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; and that where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications you make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.
- Please share with us in your supporting statement, the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details.
- Please return your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.
- Following long listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.
- At any point throughout the process our retained consultants at Penna will be happy to help you with information, insight and guidance about the process and our clients.

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Date	Activity
Closing Date	11:59pm, 2nd November 2025
Longlist Meeting (Candidates are not required to attend)	w/c 3 rd November 2025
Assessments	w/c 10 th November 2025
Final Panel Interviews	Thursday 13 th November 2025

To apply for this role, please click the link below:

[Assistant Director of Human Resources](#)

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact:

Tom Niven on 07860 657044 or email: tom.niven@penna.com

Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com

James Miller on 07701233159 or james.miller@penna.com