



Transform your recruitment in the public sector

A step-by-step guide to choosing recruitment tech that's a true springboard for success, both for your organisation and the public you serve.



Contents

Introduction 3

Part 1

Do you need new
recruiting tech? 6

Part 2

Six pillars for choosing
best-fit software 12

Part 3

Making your decision 23

Part 4

About Tribepad 28



The public sector has always been pitted against the private sector in a fierce battle for talent.

Businesses in the private sector can more easily combat recruitment competition by increasing salaries, but the public sector has no such luxury. Especially as inflation continues to hurt public sector budgets.

The mandate to 'do more with less' is constant, and attracting and retaining great people is endlessly difficult.

In the public sector, getting the right people into the right jobs is life-changing for all of us. And people finders are on the front line.

That's why it's so important to choose the right recruitment software. Because the right tech is a springboard for your organisation's success, your people's success, and the success of the people you serve.

Keep reading. In this buyer's guide we'll show you:

- The three signs you need an ATS upgrade – including why only 3% of organisations enjoy full value from their talent tech.¹
- The six pillars that matter most when you're weighing up new recruitment software – and a simple way to decide your most important priorities.
- The essential stages of settling on a provider, and the most important principle for building a compelling business case that gets stakeholders on your side.

1. SHRM, 4 critical steps to ensure a successful ATS upgrade, May 2017.

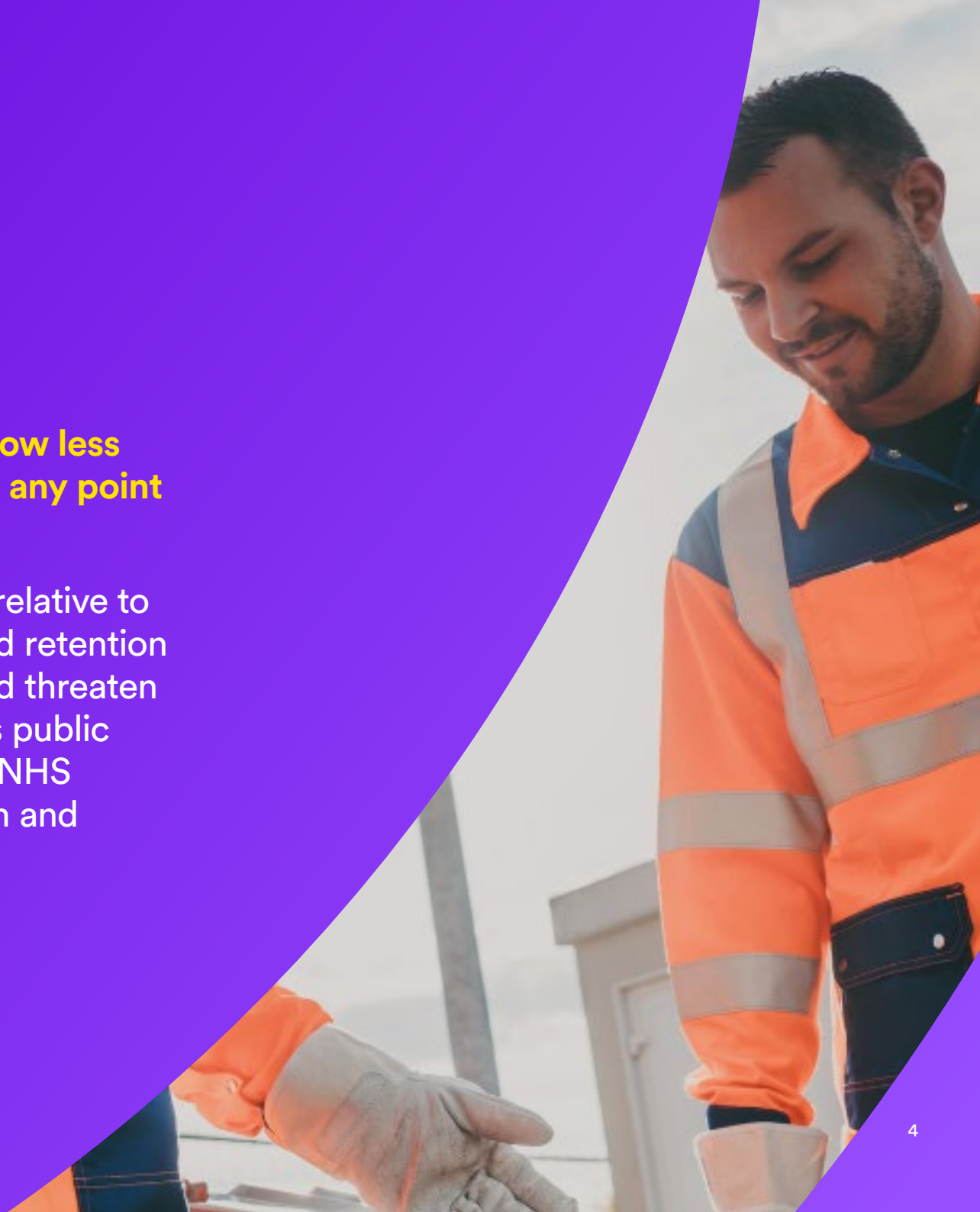
Let's go...

“

The public-private pay differential is now less favourable to the public sector than at any point in the past 30 years.

The continuing fall in public sector pay relative to the private sector poses recruitment and retention challenges for public services, and could threaten the government’s ability to deliver on its public service objectives (such as clearing the NHS backlog, ‘levelling up’ primary education and reforming adult social care funding).”

IFS, 2022



“

Talent acquisition (and human resources as a whole) has suffered from years of fatalistic “good enough” performance expectations.

But as labour markets continue to tighten, recruiting gets more and more difficult – and the business case for upgraded capabilities is stronger than ever.”

IDC MarketScape 2019²



2. IDC, IDC MarketScape: Worldwide and U.S. Modern Talent Acquisition Suites for Large Enterprise, 2019.

Part 1

Do you need new recruiting tech?

Over the past decade, the public sector's use of recruitment technology has exploded – but are you using the right software for your organisation?

The talent tech landscape evolves fast, offering new capabilities that make hiring the right people easier, faster, and more cost-effective. Software that was modern two years ago is often a dinosaur by today's standards.

Private sector businesses are fast to capitalise on technology advances.

IDC report 49% of large enterprises have changed their talent acquisition solution in the past 18-months, for example.³

The same's not always true of public sector organisations. When time and budgets are tight, upgrading software often falls on the backburner.

The problem is, sticking with legacy recruitment technology often means your recruitment process becomes less and less competitive.

To keep pace with the private sector and the increasing number of forward-thinking public sector bodies, public sector recruiters must be willing to scrutinise their current talent tech. And then take the plunge to upgrade, if that's the best way to serve the organisation long term.

“

Before starting our journey with Tribepad, I have to say that we were doing our citizens and our staff a disservice with our recruitment.”

HR Resourcing Manager,
Milton Keynes Council

3. IDC, IDC MarketScape, 2019.

Three good signs you need a new recruitment platform

#1 Your ATS is
stalling progress

#2 Your ATS is too
complicated

#3 Your recruitment
has changed



#1 Your ATS is stalling progress

Recruitment software becomes obsolete quicker than you'd think. If you implemented your last ATS a while ago, you could almost certainly get more for your money now.

Today's recruitment software typically delivers much better against critical metrics like time-to-hire, cost-per-hire and accepted offer rate. They also tend to be much more committed to ED&I than legacy software.

If you aren't making good progress towards your important recruitment goals, it's a good sign you need to upgrade your talent tech.

“

**Thanks to Tribepad,
candidates have scored us
9.2/10 for usability and we've
reduced our time-to-hire
from 108 to 28 days”**

Recruitment Manager,
Coventry City Council

#2 Your ATS is too complicated

3% of organisations are using the full functionality of their **ATS**.⁴

This is a common complaint in the public sector thanks to lengthy procurement processes and mandated functionality lists. But when you don't also prioritise usability, nobody uses your software to its full potential.

You've got powerful functionality, sure, but it's not meeting your basic needs because your flat-out recruiters and line managers can't use it effectively or efficiently. And it's probably not even flexible or responsive enough to make changes, so you can't even adapt the ATS to work better.

So instead of ROI, all you see are frustrated recruiters, managers and candidates. And rejected offers. And empty seats. And ultimately, lots of questions about why recruitment isn't delivering.

“

As anyone in the recruitment space will know, things change at the drop of a hat. You want to design a new campaign; you want a new application structure; you need different checks and balances. Those things are happening all the time.

We were adamant we wanted a system that was responsive enough to respond to recruitment needs at the speed you need.”

HR Resourcing Manager,
Milton Keynes Council

4. SHRM, 4 critical steps to ensure a successful ATS upgrade, May 2017.

#3 Your recruitment has changed

Maybe you've increased headcount and outgrown your last platform. Maybe you're battling massive application volumes and need something with better pre-screening. Maybe since COVID, you need better remote recruitment functionality.

Taken alone, this doesn't necessarily mean you need to upgrade. Sometimes, your current ATS has plenty of room for you to grow with good integrations to support add-ons.

But doing some research is almost always a good idea. At least, to check you're not missing anything great.

Shopping around is win, win

Even if you don't end up upgrading software right now, taking the temperature of the market ensures you're making the best use of your budget. And it helps you to challenge your current providers to do better.



Part 2

Six pillars for choosing new talent acquisition software

We asked recruitment pros what their biggest priorities are for buying talent tech that powers better hiring.⁵

Here's what they said:

1. Functionality
2. User experience
3. Value for money
4. Integrations
5. Support
6. Security

Let's unpick those...

5. Tribepad, Client Voices Survey and Client Voices Interview, November 2020

1. Essential functionality

“

Companies get so easily distracted by the complexity and bells and whistles... that they forget the basic challenges they are trying to solve.”

Aptitude Research
Partners via SHRM⁶

It's easy to over-complicate your needs, especially when you're confronted with mountains of providers making big promises. The often-lengthy public sector RFP process is valuable to ensure you get competitive value for money, but it can be overwhelming.

When you're deciding your must-have features, come back to fundamentals.

Watch our recent on-demand webinar to hear Gillian Davies, HR Resourcing Manager at Milton Keynes Council, talk about this process of whittling down your must-haves.⁷



[Watch the on-demand webinar now](#)

6. SHRM, 4 critical steps to ensure a successful ATS upgrade, May 2017.

7. The PPMA, Full circle recruitment evolution, Milton Keynes Council and Tribepad, May 2022.

What are your biggest recruitment challenges?

62% of public sector
recruiters say that
talent scarcity is a
major challenge⁸

55% say providing
ROI is a major
challenge⁹

19% say they have the
budget to compete
for great talent¹⁰

For public sector organisations,
the answer is almost certainly
competition for talent.

From the private sector, of course,
but also from other public sector
bodies, who're fast upgrading their
recruitment to offer faster, more
inclusive, more candidate-centric
experiences that earn attention from
great candidates.¹¹

46%
of public sector recruiters
say their current level of
automation is insufficient.¹²

Tribepad offers mountains of
automation, a template library, and
workflows for everything your team
need to get done.

**Reduce your admin burden by 25%
and accelerate time-to-hire by 50%.**

8. OnRec, Public Sector Battling with Recruitment Challenges, October 2019.

9. OnRec, 2019. 10. OnRec, 2019.

11. REC, Public Sector 2025: The future of jobs – what this means for the public sector, November 2018.

12. OnRec, 2019.

That's likely to leave you with an essentials list that looks something like this:



Pre-screening. Use AI to amplify the impact of small recruitment teams, and stop soul-destroying admin in its tracks.



Onboarding. Roll out the red carpet and welcome your people home. To give everyone you hire a flying start and curb early turnover.



Heaps of automation. Accelerate recruitment and hire the right people before anyone else can. Smash those time-to-hire targets.



ED&I functionality. Build a workforce that represents the constituents you serve. And widen your talent pool, to wave goodbye to shortages.



Talent pooling and CRM. Attract and nurture talent pipelines, filled with great people ready-to-go. Stop chasing; start attracting.



Mobile collaboration. Help hiring managers help you: empower them to handle recruitment fast and easily. However busy they are.



Great candidate experience. Deliver fair and fast candidate journeys that give candidates the right impression from the get-go.



Robust reporting. Meet compliance requirements, increase visibility, drive improvement, and prove why you're so valuable. **Ka-ching.**

Does your recruitment tech deliver?

- **73%** of job applicants abandon applications that take over 15 minutes
- **90%** of applicants expect to edit and submit their CV easily
- **80%** expect to save job searches
- **76%** expect to receive job alerts¹³

79%

of public sector recruiters feel there is more to do on improving public sector diversity.¹⁴

13. HR Magazine, Candidates abandon job applications after 15 minutes, October 2018.

14. OnRec, 2019.

“
Coventry City Council saw an increase in hires from diverse ethnic origins from 18% to 40% since using Tribepad’s anonymous applications feature.”

Recruitment Manager,
Coventry City Council



2. User experience

Tribepad has a super short learning curve. Even your most non-technical users will feel comfortably in their depth, in no time.

Usability and functionality shouldn't be a trade-off.

Every layer of complexity makes hiring take longer and hurts your candidate experience.

Prioritise recruitment software that's easy to use, for everyone who'll use it. Not just recruiters but busy managers, grabbing ten minutes to review candidates on their break. And candidates, whizzing across a quick application after a ten-hour day.

The result of a poor user experience:

- Fewer applications
- Increased candidate drop-outs
- Lower hiring manager engagement
- Slower time-to-hire
- Increased reliance on agencies

If your talent tech doesn't deliver a great user experience, then it won't deliver the talent outcomes you're banking on. And the public you serve pay the price if you can't hire great people.

“

Tribepad is so easy to use. If you want a different recruitment journey or application process, you can just... build it. And what's so wonderful for us as public servants is, you can template everything so it's easy and safe for managers.”

HR Resourcing Manager,
Milton Keynes Council

The truth is, the functionality you buy is only as good as the functionality you use.

3. Value for money

We get it: upgrading technology is an upfront investment every organisation wishes they could do without.

But not upgrading often comes with hidden costs, like increased advertising and agency spend; empty seats; lower productivity; higher workloads; increased stress and absence.

Value for money is non-negotiable, but take care you're evaluating value not cost.

Ask providers:

- What would we pay if our headcount budget grew 30%?
- What would we pay if we needed to add a new location?
- What if we wanted to collaborate with a new public sector partner?
- What would happen if we needed to freeze hiring?
- What would we pay for custom configuration?
- What ROI have other public sector organisations seen?

“

We're fighting real budget constraints here and we've had fingers burned in the past with unexpected or hidden costs. Tribepad's pricing is totally transparent and that was absolutely critical for us”.

HR Resourcing Manager,
Milton Keynes Council

For public sector organisations, proven ROI is must-have.

4. Integrations

Most public sector organisations recognise it's usually more effective to build a collection of best-of-breed systems rather than one single HCM platform that tries to do everything (usually badly).

This approach is great but means you need robust integrations to counteract siloes and capitalise on efficiencies.

Pre-built integrations are the gold standard because they're fastest and you know they work.

But don't just evaluate which integrations are available right now. Think about how your recruitment might develop. You'll probably want to add new tools as your needs and what's available changes, so also ask providers about their development processes and pricing.

“

During COVID-19, corporates that were using suppliers with a stronger ecosystem found it easier to cope with the effects of the pandemic.

The ability to activate additional ecosystem components in days, rather than weeks, gives customers an edge... Ultimately, a stronger ecosystem means better resilience for everyone”

Fosway 9-Grid™ Talent
Acquisition Report 2021

Your ATS should support future growth – not limit it.

5. Support

The public sector is under a whole load of pressure, and people finders bear the brunt of trying to recruit a workforce for whatever the future holds.

At their best, software providers don't just sell you a product. They're subject matter experts and true partners, who'll guide you to evolve your recruitment function. They'll challenge you to think differently and they'll think outside the box themselves, to solve your challenges.

Don't settle for being sold to. Invest in a partnership that'll help you grow.

Ask providers:

- What's your average response time?
- What's your support structure?
- What happens if we need out-of-hours support?
- Where are your support centres based?
- What's your uptime guarantee?
- What training do you offer – and what does it cost?
- How would you help us evolve?
- What challenges do you see us facing over the next 5 years?

“

What I loved about Tribepad right from the outset is that they are as passionate about their product as we are about being public servants. Everyone I met at Tribepad was utterly invested and really genuinely believe in what they're doing.”

HR Resourcing Manager, Milton Keynes Council



6. Security

Robust security is table stakes. Scrutiny is at an all-time high and security breaches risk devastating consequences and severe reputation damage.

Here are five things to consider:

1. Modern technology. Cloud-based tech is more easily monitored and updated than legacy tech, to stay up-to-date with evolving security practices.

2. Uptime. Modern recruitment software should guarantee at least three nines (99.9%) uptime, so your constituents are never left in the lurch.

During COVID, Tribepad supported one of our customers to process 1 million applications in a week. When you're working with those sorts of numbers, you can't afford unscheduled downtime.

3. Security standards. Your software should be certified to rigorous security standards, to protect your data from ever-evolving threats.

Tribepad is an approved G-Cloud 13 supplier, ISO-27001 certified, and our cloud-based recruitment software is developed to OWASP standards.

4. Protected APIs and servers. Your recruitment tech should be protected by hardware and software firewalls, to protect against unwanted intruders.

5. User protection. Recruitment that involves many users and locations shouldn't increase your security risk. Look for best-practice protection for user interactions.



Involving stakeholders across the business

When you're outlining what you need from new recruitment software, accommodate perspectives across the business.

A busy head teacher, or trust manager, or operations director has different priorities from your CIO; a recruiter super-user different priorities to the CHRO.

Get purchasing stakeholders involved from the get-go, so you can ensure you're asking the right questions and meeting their must-haves too. It'll pay back dividends when you come to build a business case.

Part 3

Making your decision

Now you've narrowed down your technology needs, you'll probably have a few providers on your long-list. Now's the time to get stuck into your own research.

Here are the four bases to cover...

1. Ask your network

Look for other public sector organisations that've used the systems you're considering. If you have agency contacts, they might be able to make pertinent introductions for a quick chat too.

Be careful to look for apples-to-apples comparisons though. The obvious one is comparisons to the private sector. Private sector employers often set a benchmark for modern, fast, effective recruitment but what works for a Fortune500 company isn't necessarily a good fit for a public sector organisation with different challenges.

2. Online research

Check out common software comparison sites and social media, to get an overview of your shortlist's strengths and weaknesses. You're looking for trends more than stand-out reviews:

What does this provider do well?
What are the most common complaints?

You might struggle to isolate public sector organisations from reviews sites but look for organisations of a similar size, to show the software can handle the complexity you'll need.

Common software comparison sites:

- Capterra
- G2
- Software Advice
- TrustRadius
- GetApp
- BetterBuys

Bear in mind – software review sites can be a goldmine, but providers do have to pay for inclusion and will rarely be featured everywhere. Don't let any particular channel sway your decision-making.

Tribepad's thriving client community meet annually for Client Forums to share ideas and shape our development roadmap.

We consistently hear it's one of the things clients love most about being part of the Tribepad family.

3. Client referrals

Real-world examples from other public sector organisations are an absolute must. Case studies and testimonials are great but person-to-person conversations with actual clients are even better. Ask providers if they'll connect you to existing clients.

4. Get a demo

There's no better way to get to grips with new software than a demo. You should get an instant feel for whether it's easy-to-use and can do what you need.

Ask providers to walk you through specific use cases that matter for your organisation – like, how would we manage recruitment with national oversight but local ownership? How would the software support our different recruitment processes for supply teachers versus head teachers?

And now's your chance to ask all those pricing and support questions we outlined earlier.

10 questions to ask other organisations:

1. How long did migration and implementation take?
2. What might stop us from seeing value with this product?
3. What do you like most about the platform?
4. What have your biggest challenges been?
5. What's been surprising or unexpected about the product?
6. What results have you seen?
7. What feedback have you had from your team, managers, and candidates?
8. Have there been any unexpected costs?
9. What do you wish you'd known before buying?
10. Would you choose this software again?

Building your business case

Getting sign-off for investment in the public sector can be an uphill battle. Especially when you've already got a 'good enough' ATS.

Making a compelling case means articulating why 'good enough' isn't good enough.

KPMG talk about the importance of clarity and simplification, saying "Over-complication of a business case makes it harder to scrutinise and consequently increases the risk of failure".¹⁴

Use a business case to define clear strategic objectives, which show how upgrading your recruitment software impacts important business outcomes.

For example, a projected 25% decrease in time-to-hire is great. But what's even better is a projected 25% decrease in time-to-hire which results in saved overtime costs of £200K and a decrease in stress-related absenteeism costs of £70K and an increase in resident satisfaction. (Providers should be able to help you quantify some of this stuff.)

When talking to internal stakeholders, focus on how your current ATS holds the organisation back and how a new ATS moves the organisation forwards.

And if that's not obvious, now mightn't be the time for an upgrade.

[Learn more about building a business case.](#)

25%

decrease in time-to-hire

£200k

of saved overtime costs

£70k

decrease in stress-related absenteeism costs

“

Robust business cases are crucial to making the right investment decisions.

Without one, an authority can struggle to communicate the benefit of an investment; how it will measure success; and how it will learn from the process.”

KPMG, Local government:
how to build a business case



And you're done!

Work through this guide and you'll be well on your way to ensuring your recruitment software is a true springboard for success — for your organisation, and for the public you serve.

Now the only thing left is to get started!

Here's a quick action checklist with next steps:

- Grab your team and brainstorm must-haves and nice-to-haves
- Talk to stakeholders to clarify internal constraints like budget and timeframe
- Talk to IT and confirm technical must-haves
- Create an evaluation scoresheet to assess providers
- Start desk research to build your longlist
- Brainstorm all the questions you need providers to answer
- Set up initial calls and start narrowing down a shortlist of providers

And start booking those demos!



About Tribepad

Tribepad is the trusted tech ally to smart(er) recruiters everywhere, designed to help you fall back in love with recruiting.

Our simple, flexible talent acquisition platform takes your recruitment headaches away so you can get back to what you love – helping people find careers they love.

Combining ATS, CRM, Video Interviewing, and Onboarding plus a strong integration ecosystem and a switched-on, passionate team cheering you on, our tech is a springboard for faster, fairer, better hiring.

Trusted by public sector organisations like the NHS and numerous local authorities including Coventry City Council, Surrey City Council, and Kent County Council, 25 million people in 16 languages use Tribepad.

Meet your biggest recruitment allies

Book an intro call or demo to see how Tribepad can become your biggest recruitment allies.

Making a difference starts [here](#).

“

The LBRW recruitment team target is to achieve 80% of hires across all Directorates within a 12 week period.

Tribepad allows this to be demonstrated seamlessly and effectively.”

Strategic Resourcing and Talent Acquisition Manager,
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

