

Children's University Trust

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Children's University Trust Recruitment Policy

1. Rationale

Children's University Trust will recruit staff on the basis of their skills, experience and knowledge. We aim to ensure that no applicant or employee is subject to discrimination of any kind on the grounds of having, or being perceived as having, or being associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010.

The Trust also recognises that some people who seek to abuse children will also seek employment which brings them into contact with them. We adhere to safer recruitment procedures as set out in the Department of Education July 2023 publication 'Keeping children safe in education' and by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

We will always follow the procedures outlined in our Recruitment Procedure. This policy is intended to enable Children's University Trust to meet the charity's objectives by resourcing any role with the best person to do the work and to meet our statutory requirements. It is underpinned by the need to re-emphasise the Trust's commitment to equal opportunities and to safeguarding children, to raise corporate competence and to provide job security in the event of a need for redeployment of existing employees.

1.3 Scope and Implementation

The guidelines within this policy apply to every method of recruiting people to carry out work for Children's University as an employee or representative of Children's University Trust. Therefore, the recruitment of individuals whether on a secondment, temporary, permanent or fixed term contract basis and on a voluntary basis is within the scope of this policy. It is not intended to cover staff in our partner organisations, the use of contractors, consultants or agency staff who are brought in to complete specific tasks or projects as part of Children's University Trust's work plans and who are not paid via the Children's University Trust payroll arrangement. Recruiting personnel should as far as possible all be trained in Safer Recruitment.

1.4 Law and Guidance

Children's University Trust complies fully with its obligations under:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Police Act 1997
- DBS Code of Practice 2015
- The Data Protection Act 2018
 - and any other relevant legislation pertaining with the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of criminal record certificate information.

The Trust also adheres to the employment guidance set out by the Charity Commission.

1.5 Other Children's University Trust policies related to safer recruitment

This policy works in conjunction with the following Children's University Trust related policies and procedures:

- Antbullying
- Complaints
- Equalities
- Online Safety
- Safeguarding and Child Protection; and
- Whistleblowing.

1.6 Monitoring and Review

Children's University Trust will seek to continually improve all its related safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines and will review this policy on a regular basis to confirm that content and approach is still appropriate. The review will take place whenever there are significant changes and not later than 12 months from the previous review date. The provision of equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants will be monitored through the collection and analysis of statistical data on the status of all fulltime and part-time employees and job applicants.

2. Recruitment Policy - Staff

2.1 Equality of opportunity

It is the intention of this policy to widen the pool of candidates as much as possible for each vacancy. To ensure equality of opportunity it will be mandatory that all vacancies which provide employability by Children's University Trust will be recruited using an open, competitive recruitment process. In the event that special circumstances restrict the eligibility of employees for vacancies, this decision will be made by the CEO. We will advertise for staff and volunteers using a mix of methods and using a mixture of minority and mainstream outlets.

2.2 Training

At least one member of a Children's University Trust recruitment panel should be trained in Safer Recruitment by an accredited trainer from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. It is best practice that more than one person is trained in Safer Recruitment.

2.3 References

Where possible, references for staff and volunteers will be taken up before the selection stage, so that any discrepancies can be probed during the selection stage. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted. If an applicant has worked with children previously, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, at least one reference should be obtained from the person or organisation that employed the applicant in work with children, even if that is not the applicant's current or most recent employer. This may mean requesting an extra reference where the person is not currently employed with children. All requests for references should enclose a copy of the job description and person specification.

The referee's opinion should be sought about how the person meets the requirements of the specification and his or her capacity to carry out the duties set out in the job description. Every request should also ask the referee to state whether they are aware of anything that might give rise for concern about the person's suitability to work for Children's University Trust and, if so, to provide details. In addition, requests for references in connection with current or previous work with children should ask not only about concerns in respect of suitability, but also specifically about whether the person has been the subject of allegations about their behaviour towards children. If this is the case, there should be a request for a comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken and decisions reached. The request for references should also ask for details of any disciplinary action the person may have been subject to in relation to behaviour involving children, including any in which any sanctions imposed are expired - these questions are in addition to the normal questions to an employer about details of a person's salary, duties etc.

Where references are provided by the HR department of a large organisation, a reference should also be sought from the individual's direct manager or supervisor. It is vital to compare the information about the applicant provided by the referee with the information the applicant has given about him or herself and his or her experience and background. Where necessary, referees will

be contacted by telephone in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies and a detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. At least two references for each member of staff, trustees and volunteers should be in place before working for our organisation, but students may supply one reference from their college. All employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested, copies of their employment references. References should still be sought even if there is an internal candidate.

2.4 Criminal Record Checks

Children's University Trust uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, defined by the DBS as a Regulated Activity. To this end, all applicants (employees and regular volunteers) for positions which involve working directly with children will be required to have the appropriate checks. As an organisation, Children's University Trust seeks to not place too much emphasis merely on vetting checks and ensures that there is an ongoing culture of vigilance in our organisation. Volunteers, students, contractors and other professionals are seen by service users as safe and trustworthy adults, so the same kind of process should apply when an organisation is recruiting volunteers and students to work with children as staff. Because volunteers and students fill a very wide variety of roles, however, the principle of Safer Recruitment needs to be applied with common sense and the process may need to be adapted to cater for particular roles and sensitivities. We recognise that staff and representatives of Children's University Trust have limited contact with children but that those children may consider them trusted adults. All staff and volunteers will be risk assessed and DBS checked where appropriate.

Examples of people who do not need to apply for a DBS disclosure include:

1. Parents helping out on a one-off occasion such as a day trip
2. Students who are verified by their college
3. Visitors who have business with the organisation or have brief contact with children with a member of staff present; and/or
4. Visitors or contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised on school premises.

Examples of people who do need to apply for a DBS disclosure include:

5. Volunteers who take a leading role in organising events or activities
6. Volunteers taking part in residential activities
7. Volunteers helping with children who need personal assistance or intimate care; and
8. Trustees.

We will make sound recruitment decisions based on what the DBS certificate presents, and will not discriminate against an applicant based on the result. However, if an applicant is on the Children's Barred List, it will be illegal for them to be employed in a position involving close working with children. If a DBS check on an individual already employed by the Trust indicates a conviction which is relevant and affects their suitability for the job, we will terminate employment.

2.5 Single Central Record

It is good practice to have a spreadsheet of all staff showing evidence that their identity, qualifications and criminal records have been checked. Children's University Trust keeps a Single Central Record (SCR) which covers all staff, by which we mean explicitly:

- Permanent staff
- Supply staff
- Staff on fixed term contracts or temporary staff

- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Trustees; and
- Students.

The information that must be recorded on the SCR is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- an identity check
- a barred list check (if directly working with service users)
- an enhanced DBS check/certificate
- further checks on people living or working outside the UK (including police check / reference);
- a check of professional qualifications
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom (if not from the UK)
- references (two per staff, Trustees and volunteer and one per service user); and
- a record of any Safeguarding and Child Protection Training undertaken.

The SCR should be audited regularly by the CEO.

2.6 Record Keeping

It is mandatory that full records are kept of applications, test scores, interview assessment notes and shortlisting records for a period of not less than twelve months. Criminal disclosure forms, proof of identity, proof of eligibility to work in the UK, certified evidence of their qualifications should be photocopied and stored in personnel files before returning to the individual. Copies of DBS certificates should only be kept for good reason and no longer than 6 months.

2.7 Recruitment in a Restructure

In the event of a restructure, staff can be slotted into a job in the following circumstances:

- the appointment is on the same terms and conditions
- the employee satisfies all the requirements of the job specification and has been carrying out the majority of the duties and responsibilities of the job
- there are no other staff who can legitimately claim the job
- or, exceptionally, with the prior approval of the Chair and the CEO.

2.8 Internal Appointments

Staff should not lose money because they are attending tests/interviews for internal jobs. They should not be paid to attend tests outside normal working time. Staff who attend tests during normal working time should not have pay deducted. In cases when a staff member needs to attend tests in working time, s/he must inform his/her manager that s/he will be attending for tests/interviews. Tests/interviews will be arranged to cause minimum disruption.

2.9 Appeal Arrangements

Every applicant will have the right to know the reasons why their application has been unsuccessful. Feedback will be routinely offered to all interviewed candidates at the end of a selection process to enable them to improve their performance for future job applications, and given by an appropriate senior person who interviewed the candidates and made the final recruitment decision. Applicants will be entitled to receive within 14 working days detailed information as to why they were unsuccessful and to receive details of every stage of the recruitment process.

2.10 Release Dates

Acting-ups and secondments will take place from a mutually agreed date.

2.11 Trustees

Trustees may be recruited and selected by the processes described in the recruitment procedures below, but with the additional considerations:

Trustees will carry out the recruitment process for new Trustees, with the help of Children's University Trust staff.

All candidates should be:

- checked to ensure that they have not been disqualified from acting as Trustees (they should confirm in writing that this is the case)
- asked to consider and declare any existing or potential conflicts of interest
- checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service before appointment.

The Trustees should check Children's University Trust's governing document to ensure that they appoint the new Trustees in a proper and legal way. The Chair should write to the prospective Trustees, setting out their duties and the Trust's expectations of them; they should be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. An information pack about the Trust should then be sent to new Trustees, and a full induction process arranged. New Trustees should meet existing Trustees and others involved with the charity, such as members of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. The new Trustees should be asked to attend their first board meeting and then be duly welcomed. All relevant parties, such as funders and the charity's solicitors and auditors, are notified of the new appointments and their name and photo added to the Trust website.

3. Useful documents

Charity commission Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

DBS code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Finding New Trustees, What Charities Need to Know:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/704644/CC30.pdf

4. Appendix

Recruitment Step by Step Guide

Recruitment Step by Step Guide

This guide supplements the Recruitment Policy and is intended to be a Step by Step Guide in the process for recruitment to vacancies.

The Role of the Panel

1. Establish the need
2. Plan the process
3. Describe the job
4. Describe the person to do the job
5. Agree the information for applicants
6. Get approval
7. Attract the candidate
8. Shortlist the candidates
9. Check references
10. Plan the assessment process
11. Meet and interview the candidates
12. Select the appointable candidate
13. Do criminal record checks
14. Plan Induction

Step 1 – Establish the need

If the vacancy has arisen as a result of an employee leaving, decide whether or not filling the job can be justified:

- how does the job relate to Children's University Trust's objectives?
- what is the impact of recruiting or not recruiting?

Consider the different ways of addressing the resource shortfall to decide the most cost effective:

- acting up/secondments?
- temporary or fixed term appointments?
- is the position appropriate for job sharing?
- could the hours of work be rearranged e.g. part-time, flexible, home working?
- hiring a consultant?

Step 2 - Plan the process

Selection processes and timescales will be agreed with the CEO (the selection of a CEO is the responsibility of all Trustees). Each selection process will be tailored to suit the vacancy and Children's University Trust.

To ensure quality and equality of treatment each vacancy will require the following documents to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised:

- Children's University Trust's standardised application form
- self-disclosure of criminal record form
- shortlisting forms
- assessment forms per candidate

Step 3 – Describe the job

In recruitment and selection, the job description is a very important marketing tool. Panels need to critically review existing job descriptions in order to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the job requirements. Job analysis should be carried out to provide a job description. Where these already exist, you should ensure that they are up to date and reflect future requirements. Job descriptions must:

- be free of discriminatory bias
- set out only requirements that are necessary to the performance of the job; and
- state safeguarding responsibilities.

Step 4 – Describe the person to do the job

What are the skills, values and behaviours needed for successful performance in the job? The Person Specification is the central tool of the Recruitment and Selection process. Getting this document right is one of the most important roles the Recruitment and Selection panel has to perform. It is the basis for assessment and decision-making at every stage. It sets down the skills, behaviours, and underlying competencies which enable a person to perform that job successfully and in accordance with the organisation's values. It should also identify where there are essential qualifications for the post. Ensure that only those relevant to effective performance in the job are included and that you distinguish between desirable and essential criteria. The criteria must not be discriminatory and must be assessable by selection methods. The skills, values and behaviours to safeguard children effectively should always be part of the essential criteria.

Step 5 - Agree the information for applicants

The panel should determine what information should be provided to applicants in order to assist them in their application process. Prospective applicants should be supplied with:

- Children's University Trust's standardised application form which will request the names of two referees (CVs are not acceptable)
- the link to the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection and Equalities policies
- a self-disclosure form for any information about unprotected criminal records with a separate sealed envelope marked 'Confidential – Disclosure'.

Step 6 – Get approval

The CEO must prepare a justification report to be submitted to the Trustees and liaise with the Trustees to ensure that there is a budget provision for the vacancy.

Step 7 – Attract the candidate

Once approval is received, an advert which reflects the job description and person specification must be prepared. The advert should include an equalities and a safeguarding statement. Normally applicants will be given up to two weeks to respond to an advert. Every vacancy should be advertised externally. Secondment opportunities should be communicated using the most effective media. A statement about commitment to safeguarding and equalities should be incorporated in any job advert.

When advertising externally, consideration should be given to the use of media which will reach ethnic minority applicants and applicants with disabilities.

Step 8 – Shortlist the candidates

After the closing date the applications should be shortlisted by the panel against the essential criteria from the person specification and relevant shortlisting sheets completed to show reasons for decisions. Shortlisting will be done on the basis of the application form and response to supplementary questions only.

Successful candidates should then be invited to attend for interview. Candidates should be asked to bring to interview: two forms of ID, including photographic evidence and 2 proofs of address e.g. utility bill; actual certificates of qualifications relevant to the job specification; and proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK. Monitoring of all applications in terms of ethnic origin and gender is mandatory for every vacancy.

Candidates who do not meet the criteria should be notified no later than two weeks after the closing date for applications.

Step 9 – Plan the assessment Process

The assessment process may take the form of presentation, interview questions, group exercises or some other testing which must have been agreed by the CEO and panel.

Step 10 – Check references

The interview panel should contact the referees for references before interview. If there are any concerns or questions arising from written references, panel members should contact the referees directly by telephone. The panel should agree questions arising from references, written and telephone, that should be directed to any candidates.

Step 11 – Meet and Interview the candidates

At interview, candidates will always be required to:

- bring their criminal disclosure form in a sealed envelope, proof of identity, proof of eligibility to work in the UK, certified evidence of their appropriate job qualifications
- explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment
- explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters including information supplied by their referees
- answer questions about criminal history
- declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure; and
- demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

The interview panel should conduct the interviews with an agreed set of questions that relate to the person specification for the job as this ensures consistency with each candidate being asked for the same information. A safeguarding question should always be asked. At the end of the interviews, the panel must jointly agree the successful candidate(s) using the evidence they have gained from the interview questions and must complete the relevant assessment sheets. In the interests of best practice, the CEO will be responsible for ensuring that selection is made purely on the basis of essential and desirable work-related criteria.

Step 12 – Appoint the candidate

Once agreement has been reached, the successful candidate can be offered the job, first verbally and then in writing by the CEO, subject to criminal record checks. The unsuccessful candidate(s) can then be advised accordingly and given the option of receiving feedback from a member of the interview panel. Ideally this should be no later than two weeks after the interview.

Travelling expenses for applicants attending tests and/or interviews will not be paid, other than in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the CEO.

If the successful applicant is already an employee of Children's University Trust, the normal rules for release dates, will apply e.g. one month's notice unless an earlier release date can be agreed.

Step 13 – Do criminal records checks

The procedure for DBS checks is as follows:

1. the DBS issue a paper certificate directly to the individual applicant when the check has been completed
2. staff ensure that the original DBS certificate is presented to Children's University Trust within 28 days of the issue date
3. once a DBS check has been processed, staff are required to register for the DBS Update Service within 30 days of the certificate issue date which allows the Trust to check the status of individual DBS checks when required
4. DBS information will be handled by the CEO as DSL
5. Children's University Trust will not keep the original certificate, nor take a photocopy or any other image of the certificate
6. a record of the type of check, the certificate reference number and the date the certificate was issued will be kept securely on the Single Central Record
7. for any further checks made using the DBS Update Service, the same details will be recorded on the electronic database and a print-out of the status of the DBS check will be kept on the individual's personnel file
8. we undertake to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual concerned before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment, but will refuse employment to an applicant who has a previous conviction which is relevant to their job role and in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
9. staff who are involved in the recruitment process will be trained in Safer Recruitment to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences and will only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

Details of the application process will be provided to anyone requiring a new DBS check. An application must be made, and a DBS certificate issued and presented to Children's University Trust, prior to any work with children and young people commencing. The cost of applying for the initial DBS check will be borne by the Trust.

Step 14 – Plan induction

All newly appointed staff will undertake Induction which will include sharing all the Trust's key policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equalities, Employment, Anti-bullying, Whistleblowing, Online Safety and Data Protection.

The first 3 months of the employment will be a probationary period.