

Guidance Notes On The Application And Recruitment Process

This advice note is designed to assist you with your application. You should complete your application form in full. CV's and letters of application will not be accepted as a substitute for a completed application form.

Returning Your Application

Please ensure all sections are fully and clearly completed and the declaration signed, or box ticked if you are applying on-line.

Any forms arriving after the closing date deadline will not be considered for shortlisting unless there are exceptional reasons.

Applying For this Job

As part of Cambridge City Council's Equal Opportunities Policy we want to ensure that every applicant is treated fairly. The information you provide in your application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be short listed for the selection process.

The job description lists the main duties of the post and the person specification details the experience, skills and knowledge required. Please look at these carefully and consider how you can match them in terms of your own experience, skills and knowledge.

Tailor your application to this specific job.

Contact Details

Please enter your contact details fully and clearly so that we can contact you easily and quickly should you be short-listed.

Please note that you only enter your name on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring section of the form.

Eligibility to work in the UK

Please indicate whether there are any restrictions to your residence in the UK that might affect your right to take up employment in the UK and also whether you require a work permit.

It is also essential that you provide your National Insurance Number.

Safeguarding Children and Adults

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We take this responsibility seriously and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Therefore, we ask you to declare if you have ever been the subject of a child, young person or adults at risk protection concern, allegation or investigation, even if no further action was taken. All information disclosed will be kept confidential and will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, Criminal Records Checks & Basic Disclosures

Cambridge City Council is committed to the fair treatment of job applicants and existing staff regardless of whether someone has a criminal record.

The Council is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to carry out Criminal Record Checks and Disclosure Scotland to carry out Basic Disclosures. A Criminal Records Check is used to assess job applicants' suitability for positions that involve working with children, young people or adults at risk, which are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. The Disclosure Scotland Basic Disclosure service is used to assess job applicants' suitability for positions that require access to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) systems and the PSN-connected network.

Where a Criminal Records Check is required, the recruitment information/ application pack will contain the **Criminal Records Check Information for Applicants** and the post for which you are applying will therefore be exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Where a Basic Disclosure is required, the recruitment information/ application pack will contain the **HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard Information for Applicants**.

We can and do ask you about current, unspent convictions. However, a criminal record will not necessarily prevent someone from being appointed to or employed in a post. Decisions will depend on the post and the offence(s).

Candidates will be selected on the basis of evidence of essential skills, knowledge and experience.

For posts that involve working with children, young people and adults at risk, which are exempt, all convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would appear on a DBS certificate (see below) should be disclosed, whether 'spent' or 'unspent'.

Some Police National Computer information will now be filtered and will not appear on the certificate. Cautions and convictions filtered out are set out in legislation. The legislation states that a certificate must include the following:

- Cautions relating to an offence from a list agreed by Parliament – see link below
- Cautions given less than 6 years ago (where individual over 18 at the time of caution)
- Cautions given less than 2 years ago (where individual under 18 at the time of caution)
- Convictions relating to an offence from a prescribed list – see link below
- Where the individual has more than one conviction all convictions will be included on the certificate (no conviction will be filtered)
- Convictions that resulted in a custodial sentence (regardless of whether served)
- Convictions given less than 11 years ago (where individual over 18 at the time of conviction)
- Convictions given less than 5.5 years ago (where individual under 18 at the time of conviction)

The list includes a range of offences which are serious and which relate to sexual offending, violent offending and/or safeguarding. It would never be appropriate to filter offences on this list. A list of offences which will never be filtered has been derived from the legislation and is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

This is not the complete list as the legislation also extends to cover similar offences committed under the law of Scotland and Northern Ireland or under laws relevant to the armed services.

For posts which require access to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) systems and the PSN-connected network "unspent" convictions only should be disclosed. You should submit the information with your application in a sealed envelope marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL. You should be reassured that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. If you are not shortlisted the information will be destroyed unopened.

At the interview stage, or during a separate discussion, discussion will take place about any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the post.

Please note that all shortlisted applicants for posts working with children, young people or adults at risk will be required to complete a further Declaration of Criminal Record form. All shortlisted applicants for posts that require access to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) systems and the PSN-connected network, will be required to complete a further Declaration of "unspent" Criminal Record form.

Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the post or failure to provide satisfactory explanation could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

If you wish to discuss any concerns or require further information on Criminal Records Checks and Basic Disclosures you can request a copy of the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice and Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice and/or of the City Council's written policy on Criminal Records Checks/ Basic disclosures by contacting the Recruitment Team on 01223 458198.

Criminal Records Checks Information for Applicants

If you are offered a post with Cambridge City Council that involves working with children or adults at risk, or is a position of trust, you will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Check carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), this will be done by completing a DBS Application Form and providing original documentation to evidence your identity (such as your passport, driving licence, birth certificate, and marriage certificate). The DBS will undertake a range of checks on your DBS application information and you will receive an up to date certificate from the DBS. We will then require you to provide us with your original certificate so that we can undertake the necessary checks. The City Council will pay for the Criminal Records Check and further guidance will be given to you at the appropriate stage of the recruitment and selection process.

The DBS have also introduced an Update Service, which allows applicants to register their DBS certificate, which will potentially remove the need for individual checks for separate roles. Whilst not compulsory, should you wish to subscribe to this Update Service we will reimburse the registration fee. The Recruitment Team will explain the process fully when you complete your DBS application and give you the opportunity to subscribe at that point.

If you are already subscribed to the DBS Update Service and have an original DBS certificate of the same type and level as required for the post which you have been offered, we will need to see the original DBS certificate so that we can carry out, with your consent, an online Status check.

There are 3 types of check which are available in cases where an employer is entitled to ask exempted questions under the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974. This includes any positions that work with children or adults at risk.

Standard and Enhanced DBS certificates - will include details of convictions and cautions (including youth cautions, reprimands and warnings) recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC).

In addition to information from the PNC, an Enhanced certificate may also include information taken from police records that a chief officer of a police force considers relevant to the application and/or details of whether an individual is included on one or both of our two lists barring people from working with children and/or adults at risk.

Some PNC information will now be filtered and will not appear on the certificate. Cautions and convictions filtered out are set out in legislation.

Enhanced with list checks – as above, plus a check of the appropriate DBS barred lists. To be eligible to request a check of the children's or adults' barred lists, the position must meet the new definition of regulated activity. There are a small number of other positions for which you can also request list checks.

If there are matters revealed in the disclosure that may affect your employment with the City Council we will discuss these with you.

Cambridge City Council complies with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against any applicant on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed from the disclosure process. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us as it will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences. We will only take into account relevant information which is disclosed on a DBS certificate.

If you have lived abroad for a period of 6 months or more within the last 5 years, in addition to the relevant level of Criminal Records Check, a Certificate of Good Conduct will be required from the country you lived in. A Certificate of Good Conduct is a police records check from the relevant country as the DBS cannot currently access overseas criminal records or other relevant information as part of its Disclosure and Barring service.

You will be expected to obtain the Certificate yourself and will not be able to commence employment with us until both the Certificate of Good Conduct and DBS certificate are received and cleared by us. You can find further guidance on how to go about obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct from the country you lived in at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>. Any information received via a Certificate of Good Conduct will be handled in the same way as information received from the DBS (as detailed above).

HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard Information for Applicants

If you are offered a post with Cambridge City Council that requires access to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) systems and the PSN-connected network, as part of the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard you will be required to provide evidence which verifies the following; Identity; Nationality and Immigration Status; Employment history and Criminal record (unspent convictions only).

Identity

Documentation evidence will be required, at offer stage, that confirms your name, date of birth, address and national insurance number.

Eligibility to work in the UK

Documentation evidence of your status to work in the UK, by providing an original document(s) as specified by the Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006 will be required at offer stage. Information on which documents are acceptable will be provided at short-list interview stage.

Employment History

Full details of present and past employment for at least the last 3 years will be required on your application form. If you have already left school, college or a training programme and have not yet had a full-time or permanent job, please give details of any other employment you may have had such as work experience gained on Government training schemes, part-time work, holiday work and voluntary work.

Education, Technical and Professional Qualifications

We require details of any education you have followed, including any course which did not lead to an examination or qualification. The information you give should include details of any technical, professional or other relevant qualifications. We will require documentation evidence of any necessary qualifications required for the post.

Basic Disclosure

You will be required to undertake a Basic Disclosure check by completing a Disclosure Scotland Application Form and providing original documentation to evidence your identity (such as your passport, driving licence, birth certificate, and marriage certificate). The City Council will pay for the Basic Disclosure check and further guidance will be given to you at the appropriate stage of the recruitment and selection process.

Under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, it is reasonable for employers to ask individuals for details of any “unspent” criminal convictions. The Act states that if an offender remains free of further convictions for a specified period (the “rehabilitation period”) the conviction becomes “spent”. Under the Act, a rehabilitated person is not normally required to disclose “spent” convictions when applying for a job. Special care will be taken when dealing with evidence of convictions to ensure that “spent” convictions are identified and disregarded. You should submit any relevant information with your application in a sealed envelope marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL. If you require further advice on when convictions become “spent” please contact the Recruitment Team on 01223 458198.

The Basic Disclosure will undertake a check of your ‘unspent’ disclosure information only and provide any relevant feedback to Cambridge City Council, with your prior approval.

If there are matters revealed in the disclosure that may affect your employment with the City Council we will discuss these with you.

Cambridge City Council complies with the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against any applicant on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed from the disclosure process. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us as it will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

If you have lived abroad for a period of 6 months or more within the last 5 years, in addition to the basic disclosure check, a Certificate of Good Conduct will be required from the country you lived in. A Certificate of Good Conduct is a police records check from the relevant country as Disclosure Scotland cannot currently access overseas criminal records or other relevant information as part of its Disclosure service.

You will be expected to obtain the Certificate yourself and will not be able to commence employment with us until both the Certificate of Good Conduct and Basic Disclosure are received and cleared by us. You can find further guidance on how to go about obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct from the country you lived in at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>. Any information received via a Certificate of Good Conduct will be handled in the same way as information received from Disclosure Scotland (as detailed above).

References

We will require two satisfactory references before a job offer is made, one of which should be your present/ most recent employer. Your references will be taken up if you are short-listed, unless you state that a referee should not be approached until you have been contacted. Please note: personal references are not accepted.

Employment History

We are interested in any present or past employment you consider relevant to your application. If you have already left school, college or a training programme and have not yet had a full-time or permanent job, please give details of any other employment or voluntary, school based activities you have been involved in which could demonstrate your skills and abilities.

Education, Technical and Professional Qualifications

We are interested in any form of education you have followed, including any course which did not lead to an examination or qualification. The information you give should include details of any technical, professional or other relevant qualifications. We will take full note of any education or qualifications gained overseas or as part of a Government training scheme. We would also like to know if you are a member of any professional bodies.

Personal Development

We are interested in any form of personal development you have undertaken. Therefore, please include details of any relevant training courses but also other forms of learning, voluntary work or responsibilities held.

Further Information

This is your opportunity to 'sell' yourself to us. You should clearly demonstrate how your knowledge, skills and experience match the requirements of the job, as detailed in the person specification and job description.

Remember, if you do not tell us we will not know. We will not make assumptions about you or your abilities or experience.

Declarations

If you are known to a Councillor or employee of the Council, we ask you to tell us so that we can make sure that all applications are treated fairly. Canvassing any Councillor or employee of this Council (ie. seeking to gain an unfair advantage through personal contacts) will disqualify your application.

Personal Details and Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Cambridge City Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in employment as well as service provision. To ensure that our Equal Opportunities Policy is effective we ask you to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form attached to the Application form.

Shortlisting

After the closing date the application forms are read carefully to see how much each person's knowledge, skills and experience match the requirements of the job. Applicants who, in the opinion of the selection panel, best meet the requirements of the job are normally short-listed for interview.

We will write to inform you whether or not you have been short-listed for interview within four weeks after the closing date of the vacancy.

The Interview

At the interview, the panel will ask questions which are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to demonstrate the extent to which you meet the requirements of the post. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the job and conditions of service.

The interview panel is made up of at least two panel members who will ask each candidate the same basic set of questions and supplementary questions may be asked based on your answers.

In addition you will be asked specific questions which relate to areas unique to you e.g. previous work history.

All the interviewers will take notes throughout the interview. The notes will enable the interviewers to recall which candidate said what and thereby determine the best candidate for the job. It also provides a method of recording the interviewer's decision in a clear and consistent way.

In addition, the Council conducts tests and written exercises in appropriate circumstances and you may therefore also be asked to undertake such exercises as part of the selection process for this vacancy. If this is the case, you will usually be notified in the interview letter.

Applicants With Disabilities

The Equality Act defines a disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’ This covers a wide range of impairments from mobility, sight, hearing and speech impairments to ‘hidden’ impairments and illnesses such as arthritis, asthma, dyslexia, epilepsy, clinical depression, mental illness, cancer and multiple sclerosis. Under the Act, the Council has an obligation to ensure that:

1. Disabled people receive fair treatment throughout the recruitment and selection process and in their employment with the Council;
2. Adjustments are made wherever reasonable to do so to allow disabled applicants to compete to the best of their ability during the recruitment process and to assist them in their employment with the Council.

The Council is committed to fulfilling these obligations.

If you require assistance in completing the application form or need to make your application in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact Human Resources on 01223 458198.



Positive About Disabled People

The Council is committed to all people with disabilities. The Council is an accredited user of this symbol. This means we have made a commitment to assure people with disabilities that we are taking practical steps to offer them positive employment opportunities and are committed to developing the full potential of employees with a disability, on an equal basis with others.

If you meet the long/short listing criteria, you will be long/short-listed and if you are appointed to the role we will explore jointly with you if there are reasonable adjustments which can be made to enable you to meet the requirements of the job.

Conditions Relating To Offers Of Employment

All offers of appointment are subject to:

Satisfactory medical clearance:

You will need to complete a medical questionnaire for submission to our Occupational Health Doctor and may be required to attend for a full examination.

Satisfactory references:

Please note if you choose not to give permission on your application form for your referees to be approached before short list interview, your permission would need to be sought before a job offer could be made.

Satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service Certificates:

This is required for some posts eg. those that involve working with children, young people and adults at risk. You will be advised if this is the case.

Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act documentation:

Evidence of your status to work in the UK, by providing an original document(s) as specified by the Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006. Information on which documents are acceptable will be provided at short-list interview stage.

Fair Recruitment

The City Council puts great importance on ensuring that every stage in our recruitment process is fair and properly carried out. We have a duty to ensure that everyone is treated in a non-discriminatory way. We hope that you will feel that you have been treated fairly even if you are not appointed. If you want to discuss why you have not been successful, please contact in the first instance the manager who interviewed you who will be pleased to give you feedback.

Any questions?

If you have any further queries on any of the information contained in this information pack please contact the Recruitment Team on 01223 458198, or visit our website www.cambridge.gov.uk.