**Turtle Dove Cambridge Community Interest Company**

**Recruiting and Employment Policy**

**Reviewed: May 2025**

**Review due: May 2026**

# Purpose

Turtle Dove Cambridge (TDC) recognises that its staff are fundamental to its success. TDC therefore needs to be able to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and a strategic, professional approach to recruitment is essential to do this.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a sound framework for the recruitment and selection of staff based upon the principles outlined below, which also meet the requirements of all relevant employment legislation.

This policy and procedures cover all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process. It is applicable to all staff recruitment except Consultants or freelance staff. In order for the policy and procedure to be effective it is essential that any employee who is involved in any aspect of the recruitment and/or selection of staff is aware of this document and follows it.

# Core Principles

TDC will seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and the organisation.

TDC will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.

TDC will provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in recruitment and selection activities in order to meet its core principle. Any member of staff involved in the selection of staff should ensure that they are appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.

TDC will treat all candidates fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.

TDC will ensure that its recruitment and selection process is cost effective.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual’s application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with TDC’s Data Protection and GDPR Policy.  Applicants will have the right to access any documentation held on them in accordance with TDC’s Data Protection and GDPR Policy.

**Recruitment & Selection Procedure**

## Preparation Stage

The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the area’s strategic plans and budget has been completed.

Formal authorisation for a post should be sought before commencing the recruitment process.

If a manager believes that there may be potential difficulties in recruiting for a post they should contact their manager for advice and guidance and options for appropriate action.

## Role Profile

A role profile must be produced or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled.

The role profile should accurately reflect roles and responsibilities of the post.

The role profile should state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience for the job, all of which should be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants.

The role profile will be focus on a strengths based approach to recruiting new staff and will only include elements that are absolutely essential and are not a barrier to a wide range of applicants, for example, the need for a degree qualification if it is not used within the role.

**Advertising**

As a minimum all positions will normally be advertised on the TDC website. This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff. In exceptional circumstances TDC may waive the need to advertise. This is likely to include the following circumstances:

* + positions requiring specialised expertise where it can be demonstrated that a comprehensive search has been conducted and the nominated individual is the most suitable person for the position;
  + where the work is required for a specific purpose of no greater than six months duration;
  + where current members of staff are named on grants in order to ensure the individual’s continued employment;
  + where a research project includes a named researcher, and one of the factors for awarding the grant was the strength of the proposed research team.

In certain circumstances it may be more effective to use a recruitment agency. Approval to do so should be sought from a Director. This will, however, not eliminate the need to advertise the position internally and any external agencies or consultants who assist in the process must act in accordance with our policies with respect to equal opportunities.

Applicants should be provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision regarding their suitability for the role.

Staff who have been in an acting position that subsequently becomes vacant will have to apply for the position when it is advertised, but in such cases the position can be advertised on an internal basis only.

All advertised vacancies will at minimum be placed on TDC’s website; and free development websites. All posts requiring generic skills (administration, accounting, research posts) should also be advertised at the local jobcentre.

All other advertising must be cost-effective and agreed in advance with a Director.

# Selection of Candidates

## Shortlisting

Shortlisting must be carried out by a minimum of 2 people to avoid any possibility of bias, one of whom would normally be the direct line manager.

Shortlisted candidates should be provided with details of the selection process, including any tests, in writing giving as much prior notice as possible. They should be asked to bring to the interview appropriate documentation proving their right to work in the UK.

All candidates (internal and external) should be assessed objectively against the selection criteria set out in the role profile, and only candidates who meet all the essential criteria should be short-listed. Assumptions about the qualities of internal candidates should not be made.

## Selection & Interview

Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role and TDC. Those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.

It is recommended that a range of selection methods, that are suitable for assessing both the essential and desirable criteria in the role profile are established as this will enhance objective decision making which is difficult through interview alone.

Interview questions and the structure of the interview should be consistently applied to all candidates and should be based on the role profile.

Notes recording the salient points of the interview should be taken.

In situations where there is more than one candidate who is suitable for appointment, but one or more of the candidates does not hold a continuing right to work in the UK, the panel should give preference to any of the candidates who do hold a continuing right to work in the UK. It is important to note that such preference reflects statutory employment requirements, which TDC as a responsible employer must comply with.

In the event that a candidate requests feedback about their performance in the selection process this should be arranged by the Chair of the panel, although he or she may delegate this to another member of the panel where appropriate.

Unsuccessful interview candidates should be dealt with courteously and sensitively and will as a minimum receive telephone or written notification of the outcome of the selection process.

## Referees

Information sought from referees should be specific to the type of work that the applicant will be fulfilling within the organisation.

Two references will be taken up at an appropriate time during the interview process. One additional reference may be sought in case no reply is received or the reference does not provide the required information. If the appointment is urgent, a verbal/telephone reference may be sought.

Referees should not be contacted without the candidate’s consent and the information provided should be treated as confidential by the panel members. In certain circumstances a school or personal reference is acceptable.

## Making the Appointment

TDC recognises indefinite contracts as the general form of employment relationship between employers and employees and will appoint new and existing staff to indefinite contracts unless necessary and objective reasons justify use of a fixed-term contract.

It is recognised that in many cases it is desirable to make a verbal offer very shortly after the selection process to enhance TDC’s ability to recruit the selected candidate. In such cases the verbal offer will normally be made by the Chair of the selection panel, although he or she has the discretion to delegate this responsibility if felt appropriate. A written offer outlining terms should be made within 7 days of the offer.

Offers of employment are normally subject to satisfactory references, medical clearance where required, checks of qualifications and any other checks as appropriate, for further information see the government guidance on right to work in the UK, the Disclosure and Barring Service checks (for posts that are exempted from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act).

## Induction

Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. Once the successful candidate has accepted the offer of employment and a start date has been agreed the line manager is responsible for preparing a comprehensive induction programme for the new employee.

## Safer Recruitment

All delivery staff and volunteers will be required to complete mandatory trainings to ensure they are adequately equipped to perform their safeguarding responsibilities.

For volunteers in contact with young women and present at events the obligatory trainings are:

* Safeguarding children level 2
* Safeguarding adults level 2
* Prevent duty
* Food hygiene
* Allergen Awareness

Hours spent on training will be remunerated to volunteers in the form of Time Credits.

Paid staff in contact with young women and present at events are required to complete the following trainings:

* Safeguarding children level 3
* Safeguarding adults level 3
* Prevent duty
* Food hygiene
* Allergen Awareness
* Health and Safety
* First Aid

Staff will be compensated for hours spent on trainings and should submit an invoice accordingly.

All team members involved in delivery and in contact with service users are required to present a clear DBS as part of the appointment process. Turtle Dove will then conduct annual checks, at a minimum, on team members either via the update service or by requesting a new certificate. Turtle Dove will cover the expense of the initial DBS certificate, however team members are expected to pay for the DBS update subscription (if applicable) or any subsequent DBS certificates applied for.

**Equal opportunities**

 Throughout the recruitment process it is vital to avoid discrimination. Under employment law an employer must not discriminate on any protected characteristic such as, age, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy, marital status or civil partnership, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, disability, religion, belief, or previous unspent convictions.

 Ethical recruitment

TDL recognises that recruitment fees can leave workers in situations of debt bondage.  These fees may cover costs including the recruitment itself, travel, visa and administrative costs, other ‘unspecified’ fees and ‘service charges’.  This means that many workers are already exploited and vulnerable before they even arrive.  In line with ILO standards, TDL is committed to the Employer Pays Principle where no worker should pay for a job and the costs borne by the employer.

TDL will not engage with employment agencies which charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers – irrespective of where or how they are recruited

**Probationary Period**

There will be a 3-month probationary period after induction. On successful completion of this 3-month probationary period the employment contract will be ratified.