

# Job applicant criteria

Please write your cover letter addressing **all five of the following criteria** and deliver it via email to

admin@norwichbicyclerepaircoop.co.uk or in person to

Dr Bike Cycle Repair Centre

University of East Anglia

Norwich

NR4 7TJ

[Map](#)

## 1) Enthusiastic about bicycles

Being enthusiastic about bicycles and cycling, and interested in promoting cycling as a sustainable and accessible form of transport are absolutely essential for this job. It would also be preferable to be an experienced bicycle user.

It's also important to have a non-elitist attitude to cycling - we serve a diverse audience of bicycle users and want everyone to feel welcomed. You will need to repair and renovate cycles as part of the job, so you must want to do this and either already have the skills to do so to a high, consistent and professional standard or be willing to develop them.

Previous experience of working in bicycle repair, or having attended a course of training would be an advantage, but is not an essential criterion. However, if you don't have formal experience we would want to know at a minimum you can:

- Correctly name and understand the function of most components on common bicycle types
- Know how a bicycle should be set up to ride
- Can recognise when something is wrong (even if you cannot give a detailed diagnosis, or (currently) carry out the repair).
- Have experience caring for and maintaining your own cycle, or those of friends and family.
- Show aptitude to develop these skills rapidly on the job

Amateur mechanics should also show awareness that the demands of a professional repair workshop can be quite different from domestic repair and that they might need to develop and modify their skills, even in areas where they can already carry out repairs to some extent. Even if you have professional experience, not all workshops are the same so we will want to know you have the openness to develop, improve and keep current your skills whatever your starting point.

We'd also like to know about any related skills, qualifications or experience you have, for example working in the cycle trade, but in a non-repair role; bikeability training;

membership of cycling clubs or particular types of cycling you participate in, like touring, mountain biking, stunt cycling, cycling with children or audax.

## **2) Keen to co-operate**

We are a small workers' co-operative. This means that there isn't a manager down the corridor if we can't solve a problem for ourselves; equally there isn't a fleet of minions who turn up just to mop the floor or make the tea. Co-ops are a different type of business from most, with different values and organisational structures. Probably the most important thing for this job is that you are able to fit in with our organisation, which means being able to take a reasonable level of personal responsibility and initiative while still being a good team player who is willing to muck in.

Being co-operative includes being open, conscientious, easy-going: The thing about mending bicycles is that it really matters if you go wrong, so it's important that you take care with your work. And we have to admit where we may have messed up so we can get to the bottom of problems quickly. Plus, we have to all get on really well or it just won't work.

Good communication is also key to co-operation.

We'd like to know if you think you have these qualities, giving examples from your experience if you can.

We'd also like to know of any previous experience you have of working co-operatively or collectively, either formally as part of a job or voluntary role or more informally (for example in a food-group or babysitting circle; an allotment share or as part of a campaigning group).

We'd specifically like to know of any experience you have working in non-hierarchical groups or of consensus decision making. We are aware these are ideas that not everyone will have heard about before, let alone had a chance to work with! We don't believe that you need to have had co-operative experience in the past to have the potential to be a great co-operator in the future, but we would like to see evidence that you've taken the time to find out what being a co-op means and that you are genuinely keen to be part of one.

There's a quick guide to the 7 co-operative principles [here](#) and there's lots more information about co-ops on the [Co-operatives UK](#) website (including more information about the co-operative principles).

We endeavour to make decisions using a consensus process. You can find out more about consensus decision making [here](#).

## **3) IT/Admin/Business management and planning:**

We mend bikes, but we also have to deal with the practical realities of running a business. We would like to know that you understand the importance of good information organisation and record keeping. Mending bicycles and running a business are both activities that can be fiddly and frustrating, being someone who is methodical, with good attention to detail is very helpful with this. Ideally you need a calm approach to problem-

solving, following procedures, tying up loose ends and filling in paperwork is crucial.

In terms of specific skills we would like to know that you are confident with:

- Using spreadsheets (e.g. Microsoft Excel, Open Office/Libre Office Calc)
- Email
- Word processing
- Filling in routine paperwork
- Reasonable numeracy (calculating bills, change etc,)
- Effective internet searches

And also if you are able to/willing to learn:

- Our stock-keeping systems
- Our filling and record keeping systems
- Quickbooks online book-keeping software
- Payroll software
- Online tax returns
- Invoicing

And can show an interest in:

- Business development and planning
- Financial management

We'd specifically like to know of any experience you have in business planning; financial management; grant funding applications; tax returns or any other bookkeeping and administrative roles. We would also like to know of any relevant qualifications that would equip you to undertake this side of the job. (For example in accountancy or business management).

#### **4) Customer relations/communication**

These are very important, both for communicating effectively within the co-op and with service users. Ideally you'll be able to project an out-going and friendly persona and explain technical problems in plain English. Many of our service users do not have English as a first language, which can be an additional challenge when explaining mechanical problems to a non-technical audience.

We'd like to know about any specific language skills you have; and other relevant experience that shows you are an effective and sympathetic communicator.

#### **5) Other useful skills and qualities**

**Ability to cope with a hectic environment:** Sometimes the service we run gets very busy and there are a lot of different things going on. At such times it's important to be able to get your head down and get on, even when there are potential distractions, and be supportive of the work other co-op members are trying to do. In such circumstance decisions about priorities often have to be both quick and flexible. This doesn't happen all the time, but it happens often enough that if you're likely to be unhappy with hecticness or struggle with switching between tasks then this isn't the job for you.

**A positive social and environmental outlook:** People who set up not-for-profit bicycle repair projects are generally not primarily in it for the money. NBRC is an associate member of [Radical Routes](#), and sees its work as making a positive contribution to a better world. Knowing whether you're already involved in activities (paid or unpaid) that aim to create positive social or environmental change; or make choices in your personal life to this end will help us know understand whether you share our ethos.