

Safer Recruitment Policy

Updated: Oct 2024

A) INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to ensure that the charity always recruits, hires or promotes the most appropriate applicant, employee, volunteer or trustee, and that we do so in a safe, fair and consistent manner, free from discrimination, ensuring that relevant processes are followed to protect vulnerable groups.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults with care or support needs, and this is reflected within all our recruitment and selection activities. We will ensure that the recruitment and employment of staff, volunteers or trustees who work with children and vulnerable adults is carried out in line with relevant statutory guidance.

B) DISCLOSURE CHECKS

A person's initial employment or appointment as a trustee or volunteer is conditional upon the provision of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Certificate of a level appropriate to their post.

- All potential trustees will be required to complete a basic disclosure check prior to appointment, as well completing a self-declaration which includes a declaration of eligibility.
- All volunteers and employees will be required to complete a minimum of a basic disclosure check prior to appointment, and may be asked to complete a standard or enhanced DBS check where their role fits the eligibility criteria.

Individuals may also be required to undertake subsequent DBS checks from time to time during their employment or service, as deemed appropriate by the charity. In the event that such certificate(s) are not supplied, your employment or role with us will be terminated.

It will be essential for candidates for all roles to cooperate fully with the application process to obtain DBS checks as and when required.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, we comply fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. We also comply fully with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested. Once a recruitment or other relevant decision has been made, we do not keep disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary in order to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. Where appropriate, the Disclosure and Barring Service will be consulted and full consideration will be given to the data protection and human rights of the individual.

C) RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL CHARGES & CONVICTIONS

This section sets out the organisation's approach towards the recruitment of employees, volunteers and trustees who have criminal convictions or who commit a criminal offence.

i) Employees

The organisation will not refuse to employ or offer a role to a job applicant on account of a previous criminal conviction, unless there is clear evidence that the nature of the offence committed is relevant to the job or role applied for.

If a candidate has unspent convictions, the nature of these will be discussed during the selection process. Where the nature of the offence has no bearing on the employability or suitability of the candidate in the job or role for which they have applied, this will have no bearing on the decision as to whether or not to offer them the role.

If the nature of the offence is relevant to the post applied for, eg an offence of embezzlement from a previous employer by a candidate for an accounting post, then the recruiting manager, with advice from senior management, will discuss with the candidate ways in which future offences can be avoided. If avoidance measures are possible, the candidate may be recruited. Where the risk to the organisation is deemed too great, then the candidate would be rejected for this post but might be considered for any other posts where the risk does not apply.

In no circumstances will the existence of a previous offence, its nature or sentence, be revealed to any other member of staff who does not need to know.

If a candidate is found to have misled the organisation about the existence of unspent convictions, and is offered a post, the issue will be explored through the disciplinary procedure and may result in dismissal.

The procedures that will be followed when an employee is proven or reasonably suspected to have committed a criminal offence while employed by the organisation are laid out in the Statement of Main Terms of Employment and in the Employee Handbook.

ii) Trustees

If the pre-appointment checks for trustees bring to light previous criminal charges or convictions, spent or unspent, the Board will discuss whether the nature of the offence committed is relevant to the trustee role and whether it may impact the reputation of the charity. If they feel that the charge or conviction has no significant relevance to the role or impact on the charity, it will have no bearing on the decision as to whether or not to offer them the role.

If it comes to light that a trustee candidate is the subject of a current accusation or criminal investigation, no decision will be made on their appointment to the Board until the investigation is completed.

If a candidate is found to have mis-led the organisation about the existence of unspent convictions, and is offered a trustee role, the issue will be discussed and may result in removal from the Board.

D) INTERNAL PROMOTION OR TRANSFER

We may, at times, choose to fill an open position by internal promotion or transfer. Any opportunities for promotion will be advised and open to all members of staff and if you feel you have the skills and experience to bring to the role then we welcome your application and any questions that you may have.

All applicants will be assessed objectively on their merits in accordance with our Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

E) ADVERTISEMENT OF JOBS

The individual(s) placing the advertisement(s) must ensure that they use a variety of media to reach a broad cross-section of potential applicants and must include the following points:

- the job title
- our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- details about the vetting procedures and safeguarding checks before appointment and relevant pre-employment checks (this includes but is not limited to: DBS checks, qualification checks, reference checks and identity checks)
- the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and/or personnel specification
- whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974
- the salary or pay scale
- any significant benefits applicable to the position
- any minimum qualifications for the position
- any particular skills and/or experience required for the position
- any required training which must be completed on confirmation of successful appointment
- any typical features of the position (e.g. part-time, fixed-term, outside UK etc)
- the closing date for applications.

Care will be taken to avoid specifying requirements for the position which are potentially discriminatory either directly or indirectly.

F) JOB OR ROLE DESCRIPTION

Where we use job or role descriptions to assist in the drafting of an advert, we will ensure the details incorporated are concise and relevant to the job or role being advertised and include any safeguarding requirements.

Where personnel specifications are used along with the job advert only those details which are relevant such as essential or desirable knowledge, skills and experience will be included, along with any safeguarding requirements.

G) APPLICATIONS

Application forms for employment will seek only information which is necessary for the selection process.

Where the role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children or adults with care or support needs, we will include a statement in the information given to applicants stating that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to these groups.

We will include in the application pack a link to our safeguarding policy.

Applicants will be required to provide:

- personal details including current and former names, current address and national insurance number
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- full employment history (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
- details of referees/references
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the personnel specification.

At each stage of the process, applicants will be kept informed and should expect to be told the following:

- 1) When they can expect to hear whether their application is to be progressed to the next stage of the recruitment process
- 2) What the next stage will involve.

Decisions taken to either reject or accept an application will be checked and approved by the Managing Director before they are communicated to the applicant.

H) SHORTLISTING

Short-listed candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children or adults with care or support needs, to give candidates the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

We will ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise. For consistency, the same people will carry out the interview, where possible.

During the shortlisting process, we may carry out an online search on the shortlisted candidates, as part of our due diligence. If the search identifies any incidents or issues that are publicly available online, we will explore these with the applicant at interview.

Any person involved in the selection and interview processes who have a conflict of interest should declare it immediately to the Managing Director.

I) PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

- 1) Prior to the interview, the criteria for the position should be identified.
- 2) Criteria that isn't relevant should be avoided.
- 3) Where possible, we will obtain references prior to interview so that any concerns raised can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

J) INTERVIEW

- 1) The interview will be conducted by at least two members of staff and thorough notes taken.
- 2) All questions asked will be directly relevant to one or more of the selection criteria that have been identified for the position.
- 3) No assumptions will be made nor will questions about the applicant's personal circumstances be asked.
- 4) During the interview we will seek to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children or adults with care or support needs (if relevant to the role) and explore any potential areas of concern.
- 5) Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.
- 6) Interview questions will be structured to include:
 - finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for doing so
 - exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children or adults with care or support needs (if relevant to the role)
 - probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this
 - whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role.

K) AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Once the interview has taken place and the decision has been made, we will contact the successful individual and arrange the start date for the position.

Candidates may be asked to carry out a short trial period (paid) of up to a week before we make an offer. Relevant vetting, safeguarding and pre-employment checks will be carried out before the commencement of any trial period.

If at any point during the recruitment process, any issues arise then you should report your concerns to the Managing Director who will review your concerns.

L) VETTING AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT OR PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS

Offers of employment will be subject to us receiving satisfactory pre-employment checks, including a basic DBS check as mentioned in section B of this policy, satisfactory references, and evidence of the applicant's right to work in the UK. Candidates will also be asked to sign a code of conduct and confirm they have read the safeguarding policy which will inform them how to respond to any safeguarding concerns. Where candidates have lived or worked outside the UK, we may carry out any further checks we consider appropriate.

Offers of trustee roles will be subject to us receiving satisfactory pre-appointment checks, including a basic DBS check as mentioned in section B of this policy, satisfactory references, and a self-declaration. Candidates will also be asked to sign a code of conduct and confirm they have read the safeguarding policy which will inform them how to respond to any safeguarding concerns.

M) RECORD KEEPING

We will keep a clear record of all information considered in the decision making process, along with decisions made.