

Safer Recruitment Policy

Date of next formal review, March 2022

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INTRODUCTION

PartnershipProjects, in most instances, does not always employ staff and also engages relevant associates who work for PartnershipProjects on a fixed term contractual basis.

PartnershipProjects has a duty of care and responsibility to ensure that everyone who works on behalf of the organisation, has the appropriate knowledge, experience, and skill to perform the tasks required of them. In addition to this, PartnershipProjects follows a consistent and thorough process for all contractors in order to ensure that those providing services on behalf of PartnershipProjects are suitable to do so.

For employees, PartnershipProjects ensures that safe recruitment and selection procedures are adopted which deter, reject, or identify people who may pose a risk to service users or are otherwise unsuitable to work with them.

PartnershipProjects' Safer Recruitment practice includes those persons who may not have direct contact with our service users, but because of their presence will need to be safe and trustworthy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors (Director for Safeguarding) is responsible for:

- Ensuring Safer Recruitment policies and procedures are in place
- Nominating a senior manager to implement the policy (or ensuring Human Resources processes are compliant)

You may wish to name a lead Governor / Trustee / Director for Safeguarding who will be responsible for Safer Recruitment practice since it usually falls under the remit of Safeguarding.

Management

- Implementing this policy (alongside any Human Resources advice)
- Reporting to the board (where appropriate)
- Ensuring reviews of arrangements take place
- Training provision
- Referring on any concerns about individuals who are unsuitable but are attempting to enter the workforce

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TRAINING

Individuals should not be undertaking a recruitment role without at least 1 individual undertaking the recruitment process having relevant training.

ADVERTISING AND INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

All recruitment advertising material should contain a policy statement to the effect that Safer Recruitment practice is followed.

All information given to an interested applicant should highlight the importance placed by PartnershipProjects on rigorous selection processes and should stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is appropriate, the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS disclosure straight away.

The job description should clearly set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children and adults at risk with whom the person will have contact.

The person specification should explain:

- The qualifications and experience needed for the role
- The competences and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate
- How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process

The application form should ask for:

- Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past; and
- A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including any periods of further education or training
- Details of any relevant academic and / or vocational qualifications
- A declaration, as appropriate for the position, that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs or if they have, to provide details in a sealed envelope

REFERENCES

The application form should request both professional and character references, one of which should be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is

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not currently working with children and/or adults at risk, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer should be asked for in addition to that from the current or most recent employer if this is different.

Wherever possible references should be obtained prior to the interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during interview

References should contain objective verifiable information and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children and/or adults at risk should be provided.

The referee should be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against him / her or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children and young people or about the applicant's behaviour towards children or young people. Details about the outcome of any concerns or allegations should be sought

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

For contractors, the above approach will be taken prior to offering work.

SHORT LISTING

All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Safer recruitment means that all applications should additionally be:

- Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the candidate for completion
- Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided
- Considered with regard to any history of gaps, or repeated changes, in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons

All candidates should bring with them to interview documentary evidence of their identity, either a full birth certificate, passport or photocard driving licence and additionally a document such as a utility bill that verifies the candidates name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

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Candidates should also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his / her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

INTERVIEWING

Questions should be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for.

The candidate's attitude towards working with children and/or adults at risk in general should be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of service users in particular. At least one member of the interview panel should be trained in how best this can be done.

Any gaps and changes in employment history should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee.

OFFERS OF APPOINTMENT / CONTRACT

An offer of appointment or any contract providing services on behalf of PartnershipProjects must be conditional upon pre-employment or pre-contractual checks being satisfactorily completed, including:

- Receipt of two satisfactory references - if references have not been obtained before the interview, it is vital that they are obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed
- Verification of the candidate's identity (if this has not been verified straight after the interview)
- A Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure appropriate to the role
- A check of the Disclosure and Barring Service's Barred List; this is usually completed as part of the DBS Disclosure and therefore separate checks will not be required except where the DBS Disclosure remains outstanding at the point where the person starts work
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of any relevant qualifications and professional status (if not verified straight after the interview) and whether any restrictions have been imposed by a regulatory body such as the National College for Teaching and Leadership or the General Medical Council
- Evidence of right to work in the UK for those who are not nationals of a European Economic Area country

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All checks should be confirmed in writing, documented and retained on the personnel file and followed up where they are unsatisfactory or where there are discrepancies in the information provided. All employers should also keep and maintain a record of recruitment and vetting checks of staff and volunteers.

Ideally, where a DBS Disclosure is required, it should be obtained before an individual begins work. It must, in any case, be obtained as soon as practicable after the individual's appointment or offer of a contract and the request for a DBS Disclosure should be submitted in advance of the individual starting work.

However, there is discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the DBS Disclosure. However, in such cases, the individual must be appropriately supervised and all other checks, including the DBS's Barred List, should have been completed.

Appropriate supervision for individuals who start work prior to the result of a DBS Disclosure being known needs to reflect what is known about the person concerned, their experience, the nature of their duties and the level of responsibility they will carry. For those with limited experience and where references have provided limited information the level of supervision required may be high. For those with more experience and where the references are detailed and provide strong evidence of good conduct in previous relevant work a lower level of supervision may be appropriate. For all staff without completed DBS Disclosures it should be made clear that they are subject to this additional supervision. The nature of the supervision should be specified and the roles of staff in undertaking the supervision spelt out. The arrangements should be reviewed regularly at least every two weeks until the DBS Disclosure is received.

Where a DBS Disclosure indicates cause for concern for contracted or directly employed staff, the member of staff must immediately be withdrawn pending further enquiries.

Any concerns raised as a result of DBS checks must be followed up. Where information is disclosed, employers must carry out a risk assessment and make a judgment about the person's suitability to work with services users, taking into account only those offences that may be relevant to the post in question. Where further information is required, the individual's consent must be sought and the information should be obtained by a person with an understanding of safeguarding matters (Director for Safeguarding).

In deciding the relevance of disclosure information, the following should be considered:

- The nature of the appointment;
- The nature and circumstances of the offence;
- The age at which the offence took place;

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- The frequency of the offence

Employers will also need to carry out criminal record checks when recruiting staff from abroad. Where the position meets the criteria for a disclosure, even if the applicant claims they have never lived in the UK before, a DBS disclosure should still be obtained in addition to the individual's overseas criminal records.

All overseas police checks must be in accordance with that country's justice system and UK requirements. See the DBS website for [guidance on how to access information from a list of countries](#).

INDUCTION AND SUPERVISION OF NEWLY APPOINTED STAFF

The induction of all newly appointed staff should include an introduction to PartnershipProjects' Safeguarding Policy. This should include being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of those staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

New staff members should be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the conduct and conduct agreed and signed.

They should also be made aware of PartnershipProjects' personnel procedures relating to disciplinary and grievance issues and the Whistleblowing policy.

The programme of induction should also include safeguarding training at a level appropriate to the member of staff's work.

Directors should ensure that staff are adequately and appropriately supervised and that they have ready access to advice, expertise and management support in all matters relating to safeguarding.