



Safer Recruitment Policy

This policy is set out in accordance with the Bath & NE Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board requirements for staff and volunteers carrying out a Regulated Activity with children and young people.

The Regulated Activity with which most staff and volunteers may be involved is defined as “*unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice / guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.*”

Purpose

The highest priority purpose of this policy is to keep children and young people working with the charity safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation. Safer recruitment means taking steps to ensure we only appoint individuals who are suitable for providing unsupervised activities as above while keeping children and young people safe from these risks.

Staff, freelancers and volunteers also follow our Safer Working Practices policy to ensure that all individuals ensure children and young people are kept safe from other risks e.g. physical injury, bullying and discrimination. They follow our guidelines for escalating concerns and allegations in the event that potential issues are identified.

Responsibility for ensuring these policies are carried out lies with the CEO and is overseen by the Trustees.

1. Recruitment training

- 1.1 All staff involved with recruiting, selecting and interviewing staff (including contractors) and/or volunteers are trained in child safeguarding and the requirements and behaviours required to ensure safe and fair recruitment.
- 1.2 This training includes the principles and procedures set out in this policy.

2. Recruitment procedures

- 2.1 Recruitment advertising for paid and volunteer roles includes a detailed role description including the qualities and standards required in the successful candidate, and details of the checking procedures to be carried out.
- 2.2 An application form is used requiring every applicant to provide their full work history, and is carefully scrutinised. This work history is securely held on file for individuals employed by the organisation (see also 2.7 below).
- 2.3 Individuals providing incomplete applications are not recruited by the charity.
- 2.4 Interviews are carried out by a minimum of 2 staff members, all trained as in 1.1 above. An interview panel member must declare if he or she knows the

applicant prior to interview. One interview panel member must have completed safer recruitment training

- 2.5 Interviews follow a prepared checklist of required qualifications, experience and qualities, seeking evidence of each.
- 2.6 Written notes are made during and after each interview to ensure fair evaluation and / or comparison of candidates against consistent criteria.
- 2.7 Where an individual application form has raised particular questions e.g. employment gaps or spent convictions, these must be satisfactorily explored in the interview.
- 2.8 Any disclosures or concerns relevant to safe recruitment are clearly identified and referred to the responsible director before recruitment decisions are made.
- 2.9 With the candidate's permission, application forms, work history and qualification data where relevant are securely retained on file for each individual during their time working with the organisation and for a period of six years following their employment. It is then securely destroyed. Original identity documents are viewed for identification purposes (including DBS checks) and copies of ID are destroyed once we have seen the DBS certificate.
- 2.10 With the candidate's permission, information gathered for unsuccessful candidates is securely retained for a period of 6 months and then securely destroyed, unless a dispute is raised.
- 2.11 If a candidate feels they have been unfairly treated in the recruitment process, they are invited to set out their claims and evidence in writing to the Chair of Trustees. This is evaluated by the Trustees alongside the application, interview notes and other relevant documentation and they adjudicate.

3. Verification

- 3.1 Any gaps in employment are investigated and verified where necessary.
- 3.2 Where an individual left previous employment, the circumstances of departure are established e.g. disciplinary procedures or compromise agreements. Any concerns are referred to the director/trustees for risk assessment.
- 3.3 Where required for the safe execution of the role, qualifications are verified.
- 3.4 Two references are requested. References from colleagues (other than managers) or friends are not accepted. References are checked for missed or ambiguous answers and remaining issues escalated as appropriate.
- 3.5 Identity documentation checks are carried out for all recruits, whether staff, freelancers or volunteers.
- 3.6 For paid roles (not just remuneration of expenses), the individual's right to work in the UK is verified and documentation securely retained.
- 3.7 For volunteer roles, individuals from outside the UK must prove their right to work under their visa or leave to remain. Different rules currently apply to visitor and student visas, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers, and individuals travelling to the UK solely for the purpose of volunteering may require sponsorship. These rules are subject to change and must be checked with UK Border Agency before recruiting if there are any grounds for doubt.

- 3.8 An Enhanced DBS check is carried out on all contract, temporary and permanent staff. All volunteers are subject to the same check unless they are only working in non-Regulated Activities under supervision. All individuals for whom a DBS check is carried out are required to produce the original certificate.
- 3.9 Where an individual already holds an enhanced DBS with the update service for the relevant workforce and less than 2 years old; an online check should be undertaken through the DBS update service to ensure the information held on the certificate is up to date. Individuals who subscribe to the update service are required to produce the original certificate and if there has been a change of address, a new check should be carried out with updated details.
- 3.10 New DBS applications (or update service checks) are carried out on long-term staff at a minimum frequency of 3 years.
New DBS applications (or update service checks) are carried out for freelancers and volunteers who have had more than a gap of a year between contracts/volunteer agreements; or after 3 years in the case of back to back contracts/volunteer agreements.
- 3.11 All DBS information is recorded on the Mentoring Plus Single Central Record.
- 3.12 Any Positive Disclosure information revealed is referred to the CEO and Local Authority Designated Officer and made subject to a thorough risk assessment procedure before a recruitment decision is made.
- 3.13 Where any doubts remain as to the safety of recruiting the individual, the principle of child safety first is followed.

4. Probation

- 4.1 All staff are subject to a minimum three month probationary period as a term of their contract.
- 4.2 All volunteers and freelancers agree to ongoing supervision as part of a dynamic probation.

5. Staff, freelancer and volunteer training

- 5.1 Once recruited, all new team members, paid or volunteer, receive training and written guidelines to ensure they remain fully aware of our child protection procedures.
- 5.2 All staff, freelancers and volunteers receive training and written guidelines on safer working practices and lone working procedures.
- 5.3 All staff, freelancers and volunteers receive training and written guidelines on reporting procedures if they suspect that a child or young person working with the charity is at risk of harm.
- 5.4 All staff, freelancers and volunteers receive training and written guidelines on allegations management / whistleblowing.

6. Working with third party service providers

- 6.1 Staff are responsible for ensuring that any individuals coming into contact with our children and young people having been commissioned by the charity to provide activities or other services are subject to the same safeguarding requirements.
- 6.2 Written assurances of the above are gained from third party providers in advance of any service contract being agreed.

Last updated: September 2024

Next review: September 2025