

Recruitment & Selection Policy inc Safe recruitment

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Policy Statement

The purpose of this recruitment and selection policy is to ensure:

- A professional and consistent approach to recruitment and selection;
- Adherence to the companies Equality and Diversity Policy and relevant employment legislation;
- That members of staff are recruited on the basis of their ability; and Managers are able to attract and recruit high calibre staff.

The company recruits to roles which involve direct work with vulnerable Children and Adults;

Safer recruitment is central to the safeguarding of service users. The company recognises its duty to safeguard and promote Children and Young People's welfare. This includes ensuring the company undertakes safer recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable persons from gaining access to the service.

All Managers, staff, associates and volunteers are selected, recruited, assessed, supported and appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Act 1989 and associated statutory guidance and regulations, as amended or extended, including the completion and maintaining the validity of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Any manager or staff member involved in the recruitment process will be expected to undertake relevant safer recruitment training, and have the relevant experience required.

The Company is committed to safer recruitment and employs a dedicated Business support Manager to oversee this process.

Scope

The Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure applies to the Reconstruct and operates for the recruitment of staff (and volunteers and self-employed individuals where applicable).

All staff who undertake recruitment and selection have a responsibility to ensure that when recruiting to a post, that the policy is adhered to when planning and carrying out the recruitment process.

Training

The company provides guidance and training to appropriate staff and to those new in post to assist them in the recruitment and selection of staff and the application of this policy.

Timescales

Depending on the time it takes to receive all of the appropriate pre-employment checks and the candidate's notice period, it is important to assess the time the whole process will take

from the creation of the job description to a new employee commencing employment. Appreciating the need for a thorough safer recruitment process will mean that you will allow enough time for all the stages of the process, and some contingency time may also be necessary.

Equal Opportunities

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or service provision because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

The Company is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Short-listing, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to gender, sexual orientation, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age or trade union membership.

Our recruitment team, Managers are all safer recruitment trained, and trained in equality and diversity, ensuring compiling job descriptions, advertising positions, interviewing applicants and selecting new employees, in a manner which avoids any discriminatory assumptions and unlawful discrimination during the recruitment process.

We commit to:

- Short listing of applicants is undertaken by at least two people
- Inviting all applicants to identify any special arrangements they may need for interview
- Make reasonable adjustments to interviews to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability
- Not asking personal questions which could be seen to discriminate or unnecessarily intrusive
- Sharing the interview questions prior to the interview
- Ensuring the applicant is clear what the role entails so they can fully consider whether the job may conflict with religious beliefs, or impact on their health and wellbeing.

Any candidate with a disability will not be excluded unless it is clear that the candidate does not meet the criteria outlined in the person specification.

The interview will focus on the needs of the job and skills needed to perform it effectively. A record of every recruitment interview will be made and will be retained for a suitable period of time.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

At the start of the recruitment process it is important to define what the post holder's responsibilities towards the service user will be (if appropriate), as well as the qualifications and experience needed to perform the job, with particular attention to their work with such vulnerable groups.

To confirm the company commitment to safer recruitment, it is advisable to ensure that this statement of intent be included on all job adverts for roles working with children and young people.

All job descriptions must detail:

- Main duties and responsibilities of the post;
- The post holder's specific responsibility towards the promotion and the practice of safeguarding the welfare of children that they come in to contact with through their job, where applicable.
- Suggested content for person specifications:
- Qualifications required to do the job;
- Professional Registrations (if required);
- Enhanced DBS Disclosure required;
- Define the skills and competencies required.
- Explore issues relating to the safeguarding of children, such as:
 - Motivation to work with children;
 - Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children;
 - Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.

Advertising a Vacancy

For those roles which involve working with Children and Young People, the advert for a vacancy should demonstrate the company's commitment to safer recruitment and vetting procedures, protecting every potential applicant from unfair practice and ultimately safeguarding children as much as possible. Promoting commitment to safeguarding and child protection can act as a deterrent to would-be abusers.

When placing an advert, please make sure the following statements are on the advert:

- The company name;
- Post Title;
- Hours (this should indicate if full or part-time);
- Salary;
- Permanent or fixed term (if fixed term the duration of the contract should be stated);
- Advert text (which should include some reference to the post holder's responsibilities towards safeguarding children if applicable);
- The successful applicant will be required to undergo an enhanced check from the Disclosure and Barring Service if the role involves working with Children and Young People. Further details can be found at DBS checks (previously CRB checks) for relevant posts;
- Company undertaking Digital checks
- Closing date;
- The company as an aware employer is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as its number one priority for appropriate posts.

Application Packs

The importance of safeguarding and protecting children should be promoted as much as possible throughout the recruitment process in order to deter unsuitable candidates.

Applications packs should include the following:

- Application form – (which include reference to the requirements to declare any convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975);
- Job description / person specification;
- Equality and Diversity in recruitment information;
- Relevant information about the Company and the recruitment process;
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

Scrutinising and Short-Listing

For all posts within the Group; the same selection panel should short-list and interview the candidate. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safer recruitment and selection training for those posts which involve working with Children and Young People.

All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure:

- They are fully and properly completed;
- The information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies;
- Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified.

Incomplete applications should not be accepted.

- Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment and the reasons for this should be noted, so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant, as well as a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid career move from a permanent to temporary post.
- All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification.

All prospective candidates applying for a post which involves direct work with vulnerable groups will have an initial phone conversation with a Manager or Co-ordinator before being sent an application pack.

For roles which do not involve working with Children and Young People; either a completed application form or a CV is acceptable (the method should be determined and communicated to applicants in advance).

Interview Panel

A panel of at least two people should undertake the interview, allowing one member to observe and assess the candidate and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. If recruiting for a role which involves directly working with young people, a child/young person should be present in the interview panel or have written questions for the interviewee.

The members of the panel should:

- Have training and relevant skills and experience;
- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about the appointment;
- Meet before the interview to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification and to prepare a list of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post;
- Identify any issues they wish to explore with each candidate based on the information provided in their application form and in the references;
- Notes of the applicant's interview answers should be collated by chair of the interview panel and stored (by HR).

Interviews

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the post, the panel should explore:

- The candidate's attitude towards children/young people/vulnerable adults;

- His/her ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history;
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee;
- Whether the candidate wishes to declare anything relating to the requirement for a DBS check.

The interview should also explore issues relating to safeguarding, including:

- Motivation to work with children/ young people/vulnerable adults;
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries;
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviors;
- Attitudes to use of authority.

Participation of Children and Young People

Children and young people can make a valuable contribution to the recruitment process and their participation should be considered for key strategic and managerial posts as well as posts where staff will have a high level of responsibility for children's day to day care.

The following considerations should be taken into account in planning children's involvement:

- Clarification of the role children will take in the process, how their views will be taken into account in selection and what weighting these will be given;
- Preparation and/or training;
- Process for debriefing/feedback.

References

These should ideally be requested prior to interview and received back prior to interview. One of the referees must be the candidate's current or previous employer.

Open references should not be accepted if they have 'To whom it may concern' on, no date evidenced or no obvious authorisation, these may have been forged, or may have valuable information missing if it is out of date. All referees will be asked to complete a reference pro-forma, which ensures that certain questions are asked of all candidates.

When references are received prior to interview it enables the interviewing panel to follow up any discrepancies or issues at interview and to make a decision with reference to all the facts available at the time. Obviously this relies entirely on the speed referees return them, this may not always allow for them to be seen prior to interview, but it should be aimed for as best practice as it complies with Bichard recommendations. All references need to be verified over the telephone once completed.

Employment Gaps

At interview, gaps in employment history must be discussed with the candidate. If there are gaps in their history, the candidate should be asked to declare the reasons for their break from work. Valid reasons for gaps in employment may be: the candidate did not need to work, travelling, bringing up a family, caring responsibilities, family bereavement or a period of sickness. As there could be more sinister reasons for an absence, it is important to ensure that the candidate is able to give as much detail as possible, in order for the panel to make an informed decision, and are in receipt of all relevant information.

It is strongly advisable to discuss patterns of repeated change in career or employers at interview, ensuring that the reasons for this are fully explored and satisfy the interview panel.

Qualifications Verification

At interview essential qualifications required for the post including those set by statute must be verified as a minimum, other qualifications stated on the application form may also need to be verified.

A photocopy of all the original qualification certificates should be taken, signed and dated by the person verifying the documents and if the candidate is successful these should be placed on their personal file. If the candidate is unsuccessful, these should be destroyed.

Rehabilitation of Offenders - Disclosures

All post holders whose role involves access to Children and Young People and/or vulnerable adults must have an up to date and satisfactory enhanced disclosure. The company requires Enhanced Disclosures to be updated every three years

Such posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means you should encourage your short-listed candidates to disclose any unspent and spent convictions during the application stage.

When applying for the post, candidates should be asked as part of the application process if they have any previous convictions either spent or unspent. This gives the candidate a chance to discuss the circumstances surrounding any previous convictions they may have at interview.

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily bar a person from working with children and should not be used to discount applications, unless the conviction bans the individuals from working with vulnerable groups under the provisions of the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

The company is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and young people who are placed in our care, so that they can live a healthy and happy childhood that is safer and positive, free from harassment and bullying.

At The company we recognise that we have both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care to all children and young people, and this extends to all of the Company's employees and the communities that our carers live within.

The interview allows the Company to explore a potential candidate's views and expectations in relation to working with children. The recruiting panel should seek to identify the candidate's experience or views on the following points:

- Motivation to work with children;
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children;
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
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Providing questions that ask candidates to draw on their experience of situations with children will give a good impression of the candidate's understanding of the points above. It will enable the panel to probe issues that the candidate may not discuss, allowing the panel to be aware of issues or lack of knowledge that a candidate may have or refuses to discuss their motivation to work with children.

Pre-Employment Checks

In summary any offer of employment to any post should be subject to the following:

References

There should be a minimum of two references for every employee. One of these references must be from their current or most recent employer. As the post requires working in an environment with children, it is important to have a reference, if available, from an employer or voluntary agency demonstrating the candidate's previous work experience, paid or unpaid, of working with children. This may mean another reference will need to be requested. Please see the template Reference Pro-forma.

All written references are verbally checked through by way of a follow up phone call.

Verification of Candidate's Identity

It is vital that the identity of applicants is checked and verified and evidence is obtained and recorded on the individuals personnel file. For guidance of which documents are permissible, please refer to the following website: [Check a job applicant's 'right to work' documents](#) .

Enhanced DBS Disclosure, renewal and update service

All Managers, staff, advocates, volunteers, freelance workers working for Reconstruct require a DBS.

All ID is verified face to face with a member of the recruitment team or it can be done via a video link e.g. Team but the team member verifying the documents needs to ensure the documents are clear and the person is in physical possession of the original documents.

For up to date guidance on ID checking guidelines for DBS visit [ID checking guidelines for standard/enhanced DBS check applications from 1 July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/id-checking-guidelines-for-standard/enhanced-dbs-check-applications-from-1-july-2021)

Once the Enhanced DBS Disclosure Certificate is returned, any conviction information will need to match up with the candidate's original disclosure to the interview panel. This information will not be kept if the candidate is not successful and should be destroyed.

Applicants cannot commence employment until a satisfactory DBS is returned. Please refer to the Disclosure and Barring Policy and Procedure for further details.

DBS (Disclosures and Barring Services) checks are only a record or a snapshot of the day they were issued. Since a Disclosure was issued staff may have new convictions or warnings that they may or may not have made the Company aware of. It is the company's policy that every member of staff should have their DBS Disclosure renewed every three years.

The process of renewal or re-checking a person's DBS Disclosure is exactly the same as when applying for an original. There is no fast track. A new Identity Confirmation Sheet should be completed, and then a new DBS application form should be issued.

The Company can track the status of a DBS Application with the DBS online. To do this, you will need the Form Reference number which starts with the applicant's date of birth.

We recommend that all applicants./staff volunteers, join the update service. The Update Service is an online subscription that allows them to keep their standard or enhanced certificates up-to-date, and allows employers to check a certificate online.

If you check the DBS on the update service, you must still see the original certificate, this is because the update service only gives you that day snapshot and no history information.

Positive disclosure

When a candidate's DBS Disclosure is returned with a Positive Disclosure, this is passed to the Head of service who will undertake Risk assessment (see attachment DBS Risk assessment). The risk assessment will be taken part of a formal meeting with the Head of service and a senior member of team and this is to identify the nature of the offence, if the candidate is a risk to the service users, the likely hood they will re-offend. If the risk assessment shows they are a low risk the recruitment process continues, but if it shows they are high risk, the recruitment process ends.

Overseas Criminal Record Disclosure

If the potential employee has lived abroad for a period of time or who comes from another country prior to working in the UK, then a UK DBS Disclosure will not give a full picture in respect of any criminal record they may have. In these cases an overseas Criminal Record Disclosure will need to be applied for as well as a UK DBS Disclosure and details for each country's equivalent bureau are available on the DBS website.

These checks should be made clear to candidates at interview. Any offer of employment should be a conditional offer subject to satisfactory clearances being received and checked by The company .

It is the responsibility of the applicant (who has or is living overseas) to obtain a certificate of good conduct once it has been decided to offer them a post. The applicant should provide HR with the original proof this document to HR.

The HR department will undertake any necessary checks of this document to ensure its authenticity.

Only when all of these checks are completed and returned should an offer of employment be confirmed as permanent. Do not offer a candidate an unconditional offer at any point.

Evidence of these checks should be kept and a Pre-employment Checklist completed detailing the level of checks that have been undertaken.

Local Authority safeguarding check

Where agreed with the local authority to share this information, we will undertake a safeguarding check with your Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Digital check

Due to the nature of the work, we reserve the right to undertake a digital check to review what is in the public domain including social media about the candidate

Verification of Qualifications

Any essential qualifications legally required to perform a particular job, such as Dip SW or Social Care degree, as stated in the person specification, need to be evidenced by the potential employee. A copy of original certificates should be taken and placed on their personal file. This should ideally be confirmed at the interview stage.

Verification of Professional Registration

Some posts require a professional registration with a regulatory body, such as the HCPC. This should be evidenced and placed on file if the person specification states it as an essential prerequisite.

Employment History

When checking an application form it is important to note any gaps in employment or noticeable patterns when the candidate changed their employment. At interview any gaps will need to be discussed and satisfactory explanations given and recorded. This should ideally be confirmed at the interview stage.

Agency Staff

It is essential to carry out or have evidence of the same standard of checks for all staff working within The company even if they are not employed directly by the Company. With this in mind, all outside providers should be requested to provide evidence of the same pre-employment checks that The company would complete if they were directly employing the staff themselves. This should be given in writing and in advance of the Agency staff member

commencing work and should be agreed as part of any contract between The company and a Provider of Services

Contract

Once all the relevant checks and onboarding training is complete, a contract, and privacy notice, company handbook, safeguarding agreement, should be issued to confirm the offer of employment. These should be read, signed and returned by the employee before they commence employment with Reconstruct.

Probationary Period

All permanent staff will be subject to a probationary period of six months, during which time they will be monitored, and feedback/coaching provided. During this time they will need to demonstrate their aptitude for the post they have been appointed to. At the end of this period, provided a satisfactory standard is achieved and maintained, their employment will be confirmed. In the event of unsatisfactory progress, the appropriate procedures will be implemented, and the probationary period may be extended or the individual's employment terminated either during or at the end of the probationary period.

Reconstruct Children's Services requirements for posts working directly with Children and Young People:

- Applicants are trained and assessed over a two day training course, young people are involved in the training and ongoing assessment: the training includes sessions on the fact that abusers target particular types of roles;
- Applicants are re-interviewed by a panel including at least one young person;
- New staff will not be introduced to children until all pre employment checks are complete;
- Staff are issued with a handbook containing Child Protection, Lone Working and other relevant policies and procedures;
- Staff are inducted and matched with young people and given appropriate coaching, support and supervision;
- Young people are given access to Reconstruct's coordinators and service managers via a helpline number and an email address;
- All young people are given information about what to expect in terms of their data protection, confidentiality and other rights to a good service. They are given guidance on what they can do if they are not happy;
- Reconstruct has a robust Complaints Policy;
- Young people are telephoned by co-coordinators to get feedback about visitors within three months of their initial introduction;
- Social workers and careers are also asked for their feedback with an opportunity to raise any concerns;
- The young people who the staff are visiting are involved in the annual review of their service;
- Staff are all made aware of safer working practices and whistle-blowing policy;
- Child protection training is refreshed every two years for all children's services staff;
- Child protection is an agenda item for coordinator and children's workers formal supervision and any concerns are fed upwards through our Quality Assurance Framework;

- All our Policies and Procedures are published on line for staff to access;
- In the event of any allegation or serious concern either during or after recruitment we will work with LADOs and follow our Allegations Policy.

VERSION CONTROL

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Version	Revision Date	Section Revised	Person undertaking Revision	Reason for Revision
V2_2023	11/10/23	All	AD	Review of policy, rebranding, and implemented version control mechanism opposed to having just date for next review