



“SAFER” RECRUITMENT POLICY

Introduction

A safe employment process helps to promote a safe culture, in support of our other safeguarding procedures and policies, and will ensure that even more care is taken so that those we employ to work with children and young people are suitable, and will help to deter and screen out those who are not.

The purpose of the policy is to outline clearly to existing and potential employees, Stepping Stones safer recruitment practices.

Job Description / Person Specification

Every job that we have vacant will have a corresponding job description and person specification. The job description will clearly outline the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of the jobholder, including the tasks/duties they will be required to undertake. Equally, the person specification will clearly outline the knowledge, skills and experience required to do the job.

The person specification will outline:

- Knowledge, skills and experience required for the post
- Responsibility and accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Qualifications required if necessary
- Demonstrable competencies and qualities required
- How the essential requirements of the post will be tested e.g. interview, test, presentation

Volunteers will be provided with a 'volunteer profile' which will adhere to the principles stated above.

Application Forms

We will use pre-defined application forms for all recruitment and selection activity rather than request CVs. They provide a well-structured method for gathering information critical to the recruitment process, and ensure consistency of applicant data.

Our application form gives the applicant an opportunity to provide a self-disclosure on previous criminal convictions, cautions and reprimands and for the interview panel to explore



them during the interview process. This will not remove the need to conduct robust pre-employment checks including DBS Disclosure checks.

Advertisement

Any advertisements, on our website, facebook page or otherwise will include an outline of Stepping Stones commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

We will also clearly state that the post holder will be subject to a DBS check.

Interview/Selection Panel

The panel will be briefed on the post in question and the recruitment and selection process. The shortlisting of applications and interview will be carried out by the Centre Manager and one other member of management or the Voluntary Managed Committee.

Shortlisting

Selection criteria for shortlisting will be based on the 'Essential' criteria identified in the person specification. This makes it easier to shortlist, ensures fairness and consistency and provides an audit trail for each vacancy.

Gaps such as omissions or incomplete details on the application form, frequent changes in employment that do not show any clear career or salary progression or a move from high paid permanent employment to temporary or supply work will be explored during interview.

References will be read after the shortlisting process and prior to interview.

Self-Declaration of Previous Convictions

Candidates applying for a post that involves work with children and young people will be expected to declare all convictions, cautions, reprimands and bind-overs whether spent or unspent on their application form. This is known as a 'Self Disclosure'.

The nature of the self-disclosure will determine a candidate's suitability to proceed to the interview stage. However, self-disclosure information will not be used as a criterion for short listing.

A self-disclosure will not remove the need to carry out an Enhanced DBS check.



References

References are an important part of any recruitment and selection process and even more so for safer recruitment. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective factual information.

References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. We will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials i.e. "To Whom It May Concern".

- References will be requested as soon as a successful candidate has been identified.
- A minimum of two references will be sought. One reference will be from the current or most recent employer. If in more recent employment, the applicant has not worked with children but has in previous roles, we will seek to contact the last employer where the applicant worked with children for a reference
- Our reference request will include:
 - Copy of the job description and person specification
 - Confirmation of employment dates – from/to
 - Specific details of the applicants role and responsibilities in that post
 - ability and capability of the individual to carry out the post applied for
 - Attendance levels
 - Sickness absence
 - Punctuality

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. More serious or recent concerns or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily are more likely to cause concern. A history or repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Consideration will be given to an applicant's request to delay seeking references. This could be because the applicant does not want the current employer to know they are actively seeking other employment. Such knowledge may create difficulty for the applicant if they are unsuccessful in securing the post. Where such a request is made, we will make it clear to the applicant that a delay in seeking references could cause a delay in an offer of an unconditional contract being made.



Interview

The panel will meet prior to the interviews to agree the format of interview process; who will chair the interview and to decide who will ask what questions. The panel will also discuss how it will explore any gaps in employment history and any other concerns identified on the application form during the short listing process or from references.

Qualifications

If the post applied for requires a specific qualification, we will notify the shortlisted applicants of the need to bring the original certificate (plus one copy for our records) along to the interview.

Other checks prior to employment

- Identity checks – a original driving license or passport will be requested and a copy taken and signed by a manager to confirm it is a copy of an original
- UK residence or permission to work in UK will be checked
- DBS enhanced disclosure

Record Keeping/Retention of Personal Data

We will retain data pertaining to all recruitment and selection activities for successful candidates.

Retention of data for unsuccessful applicants

Following GDPR we no longer hold onto information provided by candidates if unsuccessful in their interview once the successful candidate has accepted the position.

The personnel file will contain the following information:

Application form, Interview notes, Offer letter, Contract of employment, Pre-employment vetting documents, DBS certificate number, copy of photographic identification – usually copy of passport or other acceptable ID, copy of the original academic or vocational qualification certificates and two references.