



Safer Recruitment Policy

GoCreate Taunton CIC

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1. Introduction

This policy provides guidance for anyone involved in the recruitment of staff and/or volunteers within GoCreate to work with children and/or vulnerable adults to ensure they meet their obligations under safeguarding and attain a safer, more robust recruitment process.

Safeguarding seeks to ensure that the most exposed groups; children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected. The aim of Safeguarding is to ensure people live free from harm, abuse and neglect and in doing so this protects their health, wellbeing and human rights.

As the **Richard Inquiry Report** into the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman points out;

'...for those agencies whose job it is to protect children and vulnerable people, the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed...' [1]

It is therefore vital that managers understand there is a risk that abuse could happen in their organisation and there is a need for a culture of openness, transparency and vigilance to be created. Additionally, those who raise concerns should be left in no doubt that support in raising concerns will be offered and the commitment to take action is assured.

2. Purpose

Everyone has a responsibility to be aware of safeguarding issues and this policy aims to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced².

Safeguarding is defined as :

- Agencies working with children, young people and vulnerable adults taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the individual's welfare are minimised; and where concerns arise all agencies take all of the appropriate actions to address those concerns by working to agreed local policies and procedures and working in partnership with other local agencies.

This policy and procedures seeks to embed safer recruitment practices throughout GoCreate and ensure managers, employees and candidates for employment are aware of the minimum standards used for recruiting and selecting staff.

This will create a safer 'Offender-aware' culture by reinforcing the issues of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable groups and:

- Increasing the awareness of Safeguarding issues;
- Highlighting the policies and procedures in place to Safeguard;

- Taking concerns seriously and providing a method of reporting concerns;
- Where to get information from;
- Act as a deterrent to offenders.

3. Guidance for those who Recruit to Safeguarding Roles

This document provides the minimum standards for recruitment that leaders must adopt to ensure that candidates for both paid and unpaid (i.e. volunteer) employment are the right people, and that they are suitably checked to ensure the risks for employing them to work with vulnerable groups is limited.

Employers must not allow staff to commence working unsupervised in a safeguarding role until the necessary background checks are completed. Should managers wish to start an employee in a limited capacity before full checks are completed a risk assessment **must** be carried out, before that decision can be made.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all successful candidates for employment and employees of GoCreate Taunton CIC. This policy seeks to promote the rigorous processes and procedures to recruit and select employees and actively discourage anyone who considers GoCreate to be vulnerable.

'Children' are defined as those under the age of 18, and 'vulnerable adults' are broadly defined as " as people over the age of 18 years with a mental or physical disability who are unable to take action themselves to safeguard their own well being, rights and other interests, and are at risk of significant harm or exploitation".

5. Defining the Role

The recruiting manager, who is the CEO, has the responsibility to ensure each job is accurately and realistically defined every time a post goes out to advert.

The criteria for short listing and interviewing will be based on the job description, person specification and competencies. It is therefore vital these documents are meticulous.

Managers must be clear whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for a particular post and at what level. A list of categories that represent the professions, offices, employments, work and occupations that are known as the exceptions to the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974** are available by clicking here: [DBS website](#).

6. Advertising the Vacancy

Adverts must include the level of DBS disclosure that is required for the post. This will help candidates make informed decisions on whether they wish to apply for a post.

The application pack must also contain a statement of safeguarding.

7. Application Form

Application forms must be used, in preference to CV's (Curriculum Vitae). CV's only contain information applicants want you to know, which may exclude other relevant information.

Application forms must require as a minimum the following information:

- Personal details and National Insurance number;
- Relevant academic/professional/vocational qualifications, date and awarding body;
- Full chronological history of full or part time employment since leaving secondary school, including:
 - Voluntary work, education and training;
 - Reasons for leaving jobs;
 - Any gaps which must be clearly accounted for;
- Two referees, one of which must be the current or most recent line manager.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to posts which involve working with, or to have access to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults or their records. Therefore any convictions, cautions, bind-overs that would normally be considered 'spent' **must be** declared when applying for this type of post.

8. Selection Process

Shortlisting

Managers must short list having regard to the extent to which candidates meet the person specification and competencies that were available with the job details.

To create the shortlist the interviewing panel must score each applicant against the person specification for the job using a **short listing form**

Managers must scrutinise applications, identify any inconsistencies and be cautious about missing or vague information. At the interview, managers must take the opportunity to investigate gaps in the employment history and/or any disclosures of criminal history. These questions are not scored, but answers need to be considered as they may have a bearing on the appointment.

Self Disclosure

Interview invitation letters must include a **self-disclosure**, These give candidates an opportunity to share relevant information at an early stage, and allow information to be discussed and considered before any DBS checks come back. This is also a method of deterring unsuitable candidates.

Offences that are declared must be individually explored. The contents of self-disclosure forms must not be used to shortlist unless it is obvious an offence will have an effect on the candidate's ability to carry out the role. If a candidate who declares a self-disclosure is successful the recruitment process can be continued if appropriate and comparisons made with the DBS check once received.

Interviews

There are a number of processes that the interview must follow, these are:

- **Introductions;**
- **Information gathering;** The interview questions and responses recorded;
- **Information giving** Candidates have the opportunity to ask questions and find out about the job and their prospective employer. Probe gaps/frequent changes in employment/vagueness/areas of concern.
- **Close;**
 - Explain the next stage in the process, i.e. informing the candidate of the outcome and when;
 - Ensure identification and qualifications have been verified as original documents and that they are bona fide and take photocopies;
 - Confirm the process for taking up references, obtaining medical clearance and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, where appropriate. Managers must make it clear any offer of employment to a candidate would be subject to these being satisfactory.

9. Recruitment of Ex-offenders

GoCreate Taunton promotes equality for all and welcome applications from a diverse selection of candidates. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Having an 'unspent' conviction will not necessarily be a bar to employment. This will depend on the circumstances and background to the applicant's offence(s).

Candidates are required to complete **self-disclosures**

10. Offer and New Starter Process

The appointment of all new starters is subject to the receipt of satisfactory DBS, references and medical checks where appropriate.

11. Vetting and Barring Scheme

From October 2009, every employee and candidate recruited to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults will have their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) status checked. This will determine whether or not they can be employed or be taken on as a volunteer, and may affect what activities they can undertake. These checks will take place in the same way as DBS checks, and at present no additional forms are envisaged.

GoCreate will also be required to carry out an online check that a prospective employee is a member of the scheme and hence not barred and therefore able to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults

The scheme will be based on two barred lists:

- People barred from working with children and/or young people;
- People barred from working with vulnerable adults.

Individuals will be barred either automatically if they are convicted or cautioned for certain offences or following a decision by the DBS.

Further information is available from the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(GOV.UK\) website](#).

12. Portability of DBS Checks

Portability **should not** be used by organisations. The DBS no longer facilitates portability and organisations that choose to accept a previously issued Disclosure do so at their own risk. Further guidance on Portability is available from the [DBS website](#).

For clarity - portability refers to the re-use of a DBS check (Disclosure), obtained for a position in one organisation and later used for another position in another organisation.

13. References

When the offer of appointment is made, references must be sought. In situations where the applicant has limited work experience, e.g. a school leaver, a Character Reference Request may be sought. A minimum of two satisfactory references are required, these must be obtained directly by the organisation. At least one reference must be from the candidates' current or most recent employer.

References provide factual information to support appointment decisions, requests must include information on

- The candidate's suitability for the post;
- The qualities and experience the candidate(s) have;
- Details of any disciplinary offences against children or if there have been any

child protection concerns (if the post involves working with vulnerable groups) and their outcomes;

- Reason for leaving;
- The referee's relationship to the candidate;
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and if not the referees concerns and why they think the candidate is not suitable.

Open references or testimonials provided by the candidate, i.e. "to whom it may concern" must not be accepted. Open references/ testimonials may be forged or the result of a "compromise agreement".

Receipt of references

On receipt, references must be scrupulously checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily. References must be checked against application forms to verify dates of employment. Managers are advised to read between the lines and verify the authenticity of the referee and if the content is ambiguous or unguarded, seek expansion by telephone. Where further information is required the manager may choose to telephone referees to confirm their views on the candidate and to ensure the information provided is accurate. Details of any contact with referees must also be kept i.e. telephone calls.

Where a cause for concern arises managers must seek further advice.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations must be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time should give cause for concern.

14. Medical Checks

GoCreate may require new employees to complete medical questionnaires and/or undergo a medical assessment for new employees. The purpose is to confirm a candidate's suitability and ability to undertake the role they are to be appointed to.

Any information supplied by the medical unit must be acknowledged and acted upon before any offer of employment is confirmed.

15. Temporary Staff Provided by Recruitment Agency

Organisations that use temporary staff provided by a recruitment agency must still be satisfied that the prospective worker has undergone the necessary reference and

criminal record checks.

16. Overseas Candidates

Candidates are required to ensure they are eligible to work in the UK. Organisations may choose to pay for work permits if appropriate (i.e. hard to fill posts).

The DBS are able to provide an 'Overseas information service' which will provide employers with details of the information that applicants may be able to obtain from their country of origin.

With references special efforts need to be taken to ensure sources are reliable, employment history is break-free or explained, and supplementary references must be obtained in order to produce a proper historical work/training history.

Wherever possible additional checks must be undertaken to verify a candidate's background. Professional bodies such as the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) have separate registration processes for overseas workers.

17. Risk Assessments - Starting Staff Before Full Checks are Complete

Where there are gaps in information, concerns or matters of judgement, the Recruiting Manager will undertake a **risk assessment** to determine whether the appointment should proceed or the offer is withdrawn. Consideration will need to be given to the information available and whether further information/advice is required, whether the safety risk is small or can be mitigated by temporary work restrictions.

18. Withdrawing the Offer

Once an offer of employment has been made it can be rescinded providing the checks outlined in any offer letter are not satisfactory. This is superseded by any legal requirements such as the right to work. It is recommended you contact your HR department before any offer of employment is withdrawn.

Where it is appropriate, any concerns must be reported to the designated Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy.

19. Induction Process

The introduction of a new member of staff to the organisation begins at the recruitment stage, when messages about being a 'Safe Organisation' are first given. This must be continued through the selection process and when the new person starts work as part of induction.

Staff need to feel confident that they can raise issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, and that they will be listened to and be taken seriously. That can be achieved by maintaining an ethos of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

20. Probation/Monitoring New Starter Performance and Conduct

All new staff (either paid or volunteer) or staff who change posts in an organisation should be closely monitored and there should be clear and timely performance management measures in place.

Where formal employment terms and conditions allow, a new starter should be subject to a probationary period. The probationary process ensures that following an appointment, employees are given the necessary support and guidance to enable them to reach the required standard by the end of the probationary period.

21. Code of Conduct

GoCreate is committed to the highest standards of honesty and accountability.

22. Whistleblowing and Complaints Procedure

Candidates and employees may at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, health and safety risks to the public or to other employees, damage to the environment, possible fraud or corruption, sexual or physical abuse of clients, or any other unethical conduct, it can be difficult to know what to do.

Employees should feel confident about raising serious concerns by providing clear avenues through which concerns can be raised, and reassuring those who raise concerns that they will not be victimised.

We are committed to reviewing our policies annually.