



## SAFER RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

### Introduction

Everyone within Community Learning Partnerships has a responsibility for and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.

This policy is the first step to safeguarding and Community Learning Partnerships are committed to a robust recruitment and selection procedure to ensure that all staff and volunteers and sessional workers are appropriately screened prior to appointment. The policy is to help deter, reject or identify individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults by having such procedures in place when appointing new employees or volunteers.

### Aims and Objectives

Community Learning Partnerships believe that safer recruitment contributes to a safer workforce, and we will ensure:

- that any emerging post or vacancy is considered with the welfare of the children, young people and adults where a service is provided
- that the duties expected of the post and the required qualities of the post holder reflect our commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of others and are in keeping with good employee relations practice
- we make clear our commitment in all documentation relating to the recruitment process, including advertising, candidate information and application forms
- that our application form also enables us to gather information about suitability at an early stage by asking specific and direct questions and that the best possible individuals are recruited based on their merits, abilities and suitability.
- scrutiny of all applications and undertake relevant checks relating to suitability, character, qualifications, skills and identity
- we take up references prior to employment and will follow up any vague or ambiguous statements
- that interviews are held even where there is only one candidate and that all interview panels have at least one member trained in safer recruitment practice
- that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently and are treated fairly in line with the charity's Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Policy
- compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding, prevent and Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

Created by: Lisa Metcalf, Senior Manager – HR	Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
Reviewed by: Debbie Banks and Jenny Harris	Date: 13/12/2023
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Approved by: Executive Team	Date: 13/12/2023
Version: 8	



- that an open and transparent approach is taken when recruiting and we will endeavour to recruit the best and most suitable applicant for the position.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of new staff and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with and compliance to this policy.

The recruitment and selection of new staff and volunteers will be done in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment, safeguarding and prevent legislation.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to ensure that:

- This policy is reviewed to ensure that it remains effective for recruitment of all new staff and volunteers
- The safer recruitment procedures are followed, and appropriate checks carried out on all staff and volunteers, in line with DBS and safeguarding policies
- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults are considered at every stage of the procedure
- The Trustees delegate responsibility to CEO to lead on all appointments and involve trustees or management where necessary
- Trustees will be involved with the recruitment process for senior posts as required.

### **Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

1. New and replacement staff posts must be authorised by the CEO
2. Before recruiting new staff, the type of contract they are to be hired under will be agreed i.e., full/part time, fixed term or permanent, along with salary and hours
3. Recruitment of new staff will only take place when the type of contract has been agreed, a Job Description, Person Specification has been created and salary/hours package approved by the CEO

### **Advertising**

1. The will ensure that the vacancy is advertised correctly, with all relevant details, including the Community Learning Partnerships' commitment to safeguarding and welfare of vulnerable groups
2. A recruitment advertisement will be prepared, in liaison with relevant members of staff
3. Vacancies will be advertised internally as well as externally
4. Expenditure for any recruitment advertising must be authorised by the CEO
5. In identifying the most suitable recruitment advertiser this will be done dependant on the level of the post. The most common used advertising platforms are Indeed, Leeds City Council, Doing

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Good Lees, social media and any other relevant identified recruitment sites for the post to be advertised

6. A recruitment timetable for each post must be agreed in consultation with the selected individuals on the panel, stating closing, shortlisting and interview dates
7. All advertisements should include the job title, term of contract, hours and salary, requirements and qualifications needed for the role and details of how applicants can apply. Also detailed in the advertisement is our commitment to safeguarding and equality together with confirmation that where relevant to the post, will be subject to DBS check
8. The advertisements will also be displayed on Community Learning Partnerships' website and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

### **Applications**

Staff application forms require all sections to be completed including questions about their academic and full employment history, including their suitability for the role. CVs are not accepted.

The staff application form includes a declaration relating to convictions and working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Applicants are made aware that providing false information, may result in their application being rejected, offer of employment revoked or dismissal if the applicant fails to disclose or provides information which later is found to be misleading or untrue.

Staff application forms are available for download via the charity's website or can be requested and sent via email. Application packs include application briefing notes, job description, person specification and application form. Packs can also be adapted to individual needs when requested.

Volunteer application forms include questions on why the applicants wish to be a volunteer and the skills and experience they will bring to the role. The form also includes a declaration relating to convictions and working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Applications are available to download from the charity's website or can be provided by email/mail.

Where there are any gaps within employment history, this will be explored and questioned at interview as to the explanation and reasons for this and responses considered.

### **Job Description and Person Specifications**

Job description and person specifications are key documents in the recruitment process and clearly and accurately set out the duties, responsibilities, and essential and desirable criteria required for the position. Both documents must be in place for each position.

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## References

For staff posts, references will be requested for those applicants successful at interview.

A set reference form template is issued asking specific questions as to whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe they are unsuitable for the post and the work they are to carry out.

References will be taken directly from the referee and any anomalies, ambiguities or conflicting information between the reference and the application will be followed up directly with the referee. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken to clarify. Checks on emails received to ensure they are returned from the person and email address the request has been sent to.

References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. All references will be made available to the panel following interviews, in order for them to make an informed decision.

If for any reason references are not taken prior to interview, any decision to offer the post must be conditional upon suitable references and DBS certificates being received.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references. One of the references must be the applicant's current or most recent employer. Referees must not be relatives. For volunteer placements, 2 references are requested and must be received before the placement begins.

For volunteer roles, 2 references are requested, and their receipt of both suitable references are required before the placement can begin.

## Shortlisting

Applications received will be carefully scrutinised. This will be conducted by the panel, consisting of at least three people who will be involved with the full recruitment process, one of which will be safer recruitment trained. Safer recruitment trained staff will be renewed every three years.

Each application will be evaluated by the panel against the shortlisting sheet created (APPENDIX 2). This will address the essential requirements of the person specification and job description and required skills for the role and highlight any discrepancies for discussion at interview should the candidate be selected.

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For internal applications an expression of interest (EOI) will be requested and providing the detail received in this EOI demonstrates the individual has the relevant skills and experience for the advertised post, they will automatically be shortlisted for interview.

Details of personal information of each applicant are removed prior to shortlisting and replaced with a candidate number. This ensures that Community Learning Partnerships Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy is adhered to, and a fair selection process is applied.

When the shortlisting process is completed, the shortlisting sheet is appended to the individual application form to which it relates and retained for reference and used to give feedback if requested.

### **Interviews**

For staff posts, shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview, giving at least five days' notice of the interview date.

An invitation to interview will be sent to all shortlisted candidates detailing 1) the time of the interview, 2) the location (with link to location); 3) parking arrangements, and 4) the anticipated duration of the interview together with the expected structure (e.g., any group discussions, presentation, delivery observation etc). This letter will also ask if any special requirements or adjustments are needed.

Interviews will be held face to face wherever possible, with a minimum of two interviewers on the panel, with at least one trained in safer recruitment practice. This will allow a decision to be made regarding an appointment should there not be a unanimous agreement.

The interview process will allow the panel to assess the individual against the requirements of the person specification and job description and clarify anything further from details given within the application form. It is an opportunity to explore the applicant's ability to carry out the position they have applied for.

During the interview the panel will explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet safeguarding criteria. A question regarding understanding of safeguarding and actions taken regarding a cause for concern will be asked as a statutory question.

If a disclosure is made on the application form regarding any previous disciplinary action, allegations, cautions or convictions, this will be discussed in further detail with the applicant during the interview process. The panel will then consider the information provided and the circumstances of the individual case to assess whether this affects the applicant's suitability for the role in which they have applied.

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The same process will be applied should the need arise to conduct interviews virtually.

### **The Interview Process**

1. Interview packs will be issued to each panel member, which will include a copy of the vacancy advertisement, job and person specifications, interview schedule, shortlisting sheets (with comments) and interview questions set by the panel, in the standard form (APPENDIX 3).
2. Each candidate will be scored accordingly by each individual panel member against their answers to the questions set.
3. Rooms will be booked in advance of interviews and any other activity which is to take place (e.g., group discussion, activity, presentations).
4. At the end of the interview process the panel will discuss as a group the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and, assess the scores against their responses to questions asked. At this stage the panel will be issued with references to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether the candidate is suitable. Appointments will be made on the panel's assessment against the applicant's suitability, shortlisting and interview scoring and content of references (if available).
5. Copies of interview notes will be appended to application forms and retained for future reference, which may relate to the fairness of the interview/selection process and for feedback.

For volunteer roles, applicants will be met face-to-face by the individual project managers to ensure their suitability for placement on individual projects.

### **Rejections**

Applicants who are not successful in securing an interview, will be notified by phone or email, giving reasons and feedback as to why they have been unsuccessful.

Copies of all information relating to decisions are appended to application forms and for the successful candidate(s) will be kept on personnel files.

All correspondence relating to applicants that were unsuccessful through the recruitment process will be kept for a maximum of three months and then will be destroyed in line with the charity's document retention and disposal policy, complying to GDPR and Data Protection regulations.

### **Offer of Appointment**

Once an appointment has been decided, we will issue an official offer letter and contract of employment, along with personal details and payroll forms. The initial offer will be made subject to

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satisfactory references (if not yet received) and relevant checks, such as identity/right to work, qualifications and DBS certificate information (where relevant to the role).

The appointment letter will contain the following information: position, salary, mutually acceptable commencement date (if not known, ask for urgent confirmation), 3 months probationary period, reference to any meetings required prior to the starting date, whether it is a fixed term, temporary or permanent contract.

The successful applicant will be required to accept the offer in writing (email acceptable) and return a signed contract of employment, agreeing to the terms and conditions offered.

Prior to the new starter commencing employment, it is conditional on the following:

1. Acceptance of the offer and signed contract received, agreeing to terms and conditions
2. Verification of the applicant's identity
3. The receipt of two satisfactory references (one from current or most recent employer)
4. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) certificate (where relevant to the role)
5. Original certificates of qualifications / training have been seen and copies taken

A personnel file checklist is used to track and ensure all relevant documentation has been received.

#### **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The act does not apply to positions which involve working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults and therefore, where relevant to the post, any convictions and cautions which would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying.

#### **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check**

The charity will apply for a standard or enhanced DBS check for eligible posts. Where relevant to the role a check on the Children's or Adult's barred list will be carried out.

An employee can commence employment, prior to a DBS disclosure certificate being received, but must not be unsupervised, in regulated activity until this has been received.

Volunteers on the Let's Read Programme are not permitted to start in school until a satisfactory DBS certificate has been received and the original seen by their project manager.

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New staff and volunteers are encouraged to register with the DBS update service, to ensure that their disclosure is portable and can be checked online for any updates since the original certificate was issued.

It is the charity's policy to re-check staff and volunteer DBS certificates every three years.

Please refer to the DBS policy for further information.

### **COVID Safety**

Community Learning Partnerships continues to implement COVID safety measures within the office. Details of this will be shared with interviewees in advance of their interview to enable them to prepare. Employee COVID safety manual will be shared with successful applicants prior to commencing in post.

### **Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification Checks**

Identification for all new employees and volunteers is required to be verified prior to commencing in role. Identification documents such as passport, driving licence, birth certificate etc. originals must be seen as proof of identity. If Right to Work checks are required, this will be done in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Where there has been a change in name then documentation such as marriage, adoption or deed poll certificate will be required as evidence.

### **Medical Fitness**

An equal opportunities questionnaire is issued to all new employees, which asks questions relating to medical fitness, to ensure that we are aware of any medical or health issues and to ensure that the relevant support is given, or adaptations made. This information may be shared with Appointed First Aiders, if necessary.

### **Induction programme**

All new staff will be subject to a new starter induction, during which they are given an induction pack, relevant policies and procedures and an employee handbook. Following this induction on the job training and shadowing will be provided.

All volunteers receive an induction and relevant training. Please refer to Volunteer Policy for further information.

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### **Personnel files**

Electronic and paper-based personnel files will be created for new members of staff and volunteers, which include all paperwork associated with the appointment. These are kept securely in line with data protection, handling, storage and GDPR policies.

Personal details are stored securely in locked cabinets or only available to authorised personnel. Electronic data has restricted access and files password protected.

Application details and interview notes on unsuccessful applicants will be held for a period of 3 months and then destroyed in line with the charity's Document Retention and Disposal Policy.

### **Ongoing Employment**

Safer recruitment and selection are just the start of employment and is part of a bigger framework. The organisation provides ongoing training and support to all staff. All staff appointed are subject to a 3-month probationary period, with reviews at 6 and 12 weeks. Please refer to the Performance Management Procedures for further information.

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