

Safer Recruitment Policy



About with Friends



“About with Friends is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its members with learning disabilities and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

1. Policy objectives

The purpose of this policy is to

- a) Ensure the welfare of the child or young person is always paramount
- b) Ensure About with Friends policies and procedures follow and abide by the standards set out by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board, being updated as necessary.
- c) Ensure staff have a clear understanding of the legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
- d) Promote and maintain a culture where staff are encouraged to share concerns and respond to those concerns and allegations immediately and appropriately via the child protection referral procedures
- e) Ensure awareness and understanding that young people with learning difficulties may be more vulnerable to abuse
- f) remain aware of any changes in legislation that affect child protection and keep staff updated with all relevant change
- g) Ensure the ‘Safer Recruitment’ guidelines and best practice are adhered to

Note: A child is a person 17 years or under

2. Safer recruitment policy in operation

A well-planned and structured recruitment procedure is vital in ensuring the best person is recruited for the role, and to determine whether someone is suitable to work with children and adults with learning disabilities. The key to safer recruitment is rigorous scrutiny. All information gathered during the process must be thoroughly checked at every stage. It is important that the need to safeguard children and adults with learning disabilities is also considered throughout the recruitment process.

Safer practice in recruitment means that the safety and welfare of our members is paramount at every stage of the process. It starts with detailed planning of the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the charities commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its members. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants. Key elements within this process include:

- ensuring the job description for all posts/roles makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our members

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- ensuring that the person specification for all posts/roles includes specific reference to suitability to work with children and adults with learning disabilities;
- obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies;
- obtaining independent professional references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns;
- a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children and adults with learning disabilities as well as his or her suitability for the post;
- verifying the successful applicant's identity;
- verifying that they have the Right to Work in the UK (where employed)
- verifying the successful applicant's qualifications;
- checking his or her previous employment history and experience;
- carrying out an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Check for roles in ["regulated activity"](#)
- Where adults do not have a specific role working with children, but are likely to be in contact with children during the course of their work, the safer recruitment practices still apply.

3. Commitment to Safeguarding Principles

A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults with learning disabilities is implicit in all charity policies and as policies are reviewed in their natural cycle, the following statement will be included.

"About with Friends is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of it's members with learning disabilities and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment."

This statement will also be included in all:

- Advertisements
- Publicity, information and websites
- Candidate information packs
- Person specifications
- Job descriptions
- Induction and other staff training materials

4. Planning and Advertising

Planning is vital to successful recruitment. A successful candidate will need to demonstrate a mix of qualities, qualifications and experience. These requirements will be clearly set out in the advertisement for the post in order to prevent unwanted applications. Each vacancy will be planned, identifying who will be involved, assigning responsibilities, and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage so that safeguards are not skimmed or overlooked. For example, it is

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important to organise the selection process to allow references to be obtained on short listed candidates **before** interview, where possible.

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will include a statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its members as well as reference to the fact all applicants will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS disclosure form (for regulated where applicable) and bring evidence of identity, Right to Work in the UK and qualifications. All documentation must be photocopied and signed and dated by the relevant recruiting manager as verification of having seen the originals.

All information given to applicants will highlight the importance placed by the organisation on a rigorous selection process and that the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is everybody's business.

5. The Application Form (appendix 1)

All roles will require applicants to complete an Application Form. Application Forms will contain the following

- ✓ full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance Number.
- ✓ a statement of any relevant education/training/qualifications
- ✓ a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start and end dates
- ✓ details/explanations for periods not in employment, education or training, and reasons for leaving employment;
- ✓ a safeguarding declaration (this may be a separate form)
- ✓ a section where the individual gives their permission for a copy of their DBS to be retained on a confidential file for the period of their employment and for the employer to carry out on line DBS Update Service checks where applicable/eligible
- ✓ details of referees. Two employment references are required, one of which will be the applicant's current or most recent employer. The reference form must make it clear that references will not be accepted from work colleagues, relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends;
- ✓ a statement of the applicant's personal qualities;
- ✓ any experience that the applicant believes is relevant to his or her suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification and/or job description.

The application form will also require a signed statement (or declaration form) that the person is not disqualified from work with children through the ISA's Barring Lists (List 99) or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body and has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs.

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If an individual has a conviction, caution or bind-over then they will be asked to attach details of their record in a sealed envelope marked confidential. This gives the applicant an opportunity to flag up something that may not be relevant in a confidential way. It also encourages the applicant to be open about any issues so that, if necessary, it can be discussed with them either prior to or at interview, rather than having to wait for a DBS disclosure.

The declaration demonstrates that AWF takes safe recruitment seriously. Having a written declaration means that if successful candidate has deliberately lied about his or her criminal background, it is easier for the police, regulatory agency or organisation to take action against the person. The signed statement will also confirm that all information provided on the application form is true.

6. The Job Description

Once a post becomes vacant or a new post is created, the job description will be reviewed to ensure compliance with this safer recruitment guidance. This applies whatever the level of responsibility or duration of the appointment. The job description will clearly state:

- ✓ the main duties and responsibilities of the post;
- ✓ that the role will be subject to an Enhanced DBS disclosure
- ✓ the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and adults with learning disabilities and young people they are responsible for, or come into contact with

7. The Person Specification

The Person Specification is supplementary information to the job description and lists essential and desirable criteria for the post. It will:

- ✓ include the qualifications and experience, and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people
- ✓ describe the skills and experience that the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate to fulfil the responsibilities of the
- ✓ include safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults with learning disabilities as part of the short listing for interview process as it can provide objective criteria for selection. The ability to contribute to safeguarding and promoting welfare is an essential attribute
- ✓ set out common core skills and knowledge required such as effective communication and engagement, knowledge of development, supporting transitions, multi-agency working and sharing information

8. The Application Information Pack

The application pack will be available for downloading from the AWF website. It includes

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- ✓ The application form; and explanatory notes about completing the form;
- ✓ the job description and person specification;
- ✓ Diversity monitoring form
- ✓ Criminal record disclosure
- ✓ relevant information about the organisation and policies such as safeguarding policies, H&S;
- ✓ any specific terms and conditions relating to the post

9. *Scrutinising and Shortlisting Applications*

Initially, all applications will be checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified will be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant. As well as obtaining reasons for gaps in employment, the reasons for any repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work will also be explored and verified.

At least two people will be involved in the process of scrutinising applications and short listing candidates. At least one member of the panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

9. *References (appendix 2)*

A person's past behaviour is the most reliable way of predicting future behaviour. Consequently the information that you can obtain from referees can be very important. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.

Where possible references will be taken up prior to interview.

A reference will be obtained from the applicants current employer and in most circumstances this will be a role in which the applicant has worked with children and adults with learning disabilities. Where an applicant does not have current experience of working with children and adults with learning disabilities but has done so in the past, a reference will also be sought from the relevant previous organisation.

Any offer of employment will always be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references and health check. References will always be obtained in writing and telephone contact must be made with at least one referee (the most recent or relevant) in order to verify the reference. Referees will be asked to comment on work and professional competence and personal qualities, although it will be borne in mind that comments on "personal qualities" can be highly subjective.

References will also specifically request information on the applicant's suitability to work with children and adults with learning disabilities details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to including those where the sanction has expired. All reference requests will contain a copy of the job description and person specification.

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About with Friends will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. "To Whom It May Concern".. Verbal references are also not acceptable. If an employer says it is not their policy to provide references, the applicant must be asked to nominate another referee.

References must be thoroughly screened to ensure the referee has answered all the questions. Explanations must be sought in relation to any gaps in employment. Any vague or ambiguous statements must be noted and explored at interview, where possible or followed up after interview.

Information provided by the referee will be compared with the information provided by the applicant in his or her application and any discrepancies checked.

Where references reveal any inconsistencies or doubts about the person's suitability, the issues will be followed up and explored with the referee. Written records of any telephone conversations and where the issues are significant, more detailed information sought in writing from the referee. This is particularly important where a decision is made not to consider the person further, or where issues need to be explored further with the applicant.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

- ✓ the receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if not obtained prior to interview) and discussion with at least one of these (the most relevant and recent).
- ✓ proof of the candidate's identity (where this has not been verified at interview);
- ✓ proof of the candidate's right to work in the UK (see section on Identity and Immigration)
- ✓ a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Disclosure where they are working in "regulated activity"
- ✓ verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post (if not verified at the
- ✓ Fit for work declaration from the charities occupational health provider
- ✓ completion of any probationary period where applicable

10. Interviews

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children. Please also refer to the section on Interview Panels below.

11. Invitation to Interview (appendix 3)

In addition to confirming the normal arrangements for interviews, the invitation to the candidate will explain how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children and adults with learning disabilities.

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The invitation will also stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that where a DBS Disclosure is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS Disclosure straight away. All candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity to satisfy DBS requirements, i.e. either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, plus documents such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation. More information can be obtained from the [Disclosure and Barring Service website](#).

Candidates will also be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body.

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work in the U.K and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file. These will be signed and dated by the person carrying out the checks.

12. Interview Panel

All interview panels will have at least two people and where possible and suitable a member with learning disabilities. In the case of senior or specialists posts, a larger panel might be appropriate, including a Trustee.

13. Scope of the Interview (appendix 4)

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

- a) the candidate's attitude toward children and adults with learning disabilities
- b) their motivation and reason for working with children and adults with learning disabilities
- c) their attitudes to authority and maintaining discipline
- d) their perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children and adults with learning disabilities
- e) their ability to form and maintain professional relationships
- f) their general understanding of safeguarding of children and adults with learning disabilities
- g) his or her ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- h) gaps in the candidate's employment history; and concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee

Where possible, references will be obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before they start work. If, however, it has not been possible to obtain references before the interview, the candidate will be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to his or her referees.

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Applicants may be invited to attend a second interview that includes a practical assessment dependant on the position.

14. *Conditional Offer of Appointment*

Any offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon the following (this will be stated at interview and in the offer letter):

15. *Post Appointment: Induction*

All new starters will undertake an induction programme for newly appointed staff and volunteers regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults with learning disabilities is concerned the induction programme will include information about:

- ✓ time to read through the 'Staff' and 'Working with our Members' handbooks
- ✓ any written statements of policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, touch policy, intimate care, internet safety, child protection and safeguarding procedures and whistle blowing policy;
- ✓ safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff in the organisation;
- ✓ how and with whom any concerns about those issues will be raised; and other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, managing performance and whistle blowing.
- ✓ provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and
- ✓ enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

- ✓ provide training and information about the charity's policies and procedures;
- ✓ support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged;
- ✓ confirm the conduct expected of staff within the charity;
- ✓ provide opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and
- ✓ enable the person's line manager to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

The information contained in this section has been taken from the DfE Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Guidelines and adapted for the purposes of this manual. Managers will ensure they are familiar with the guidelines and ensure continued awareness of safeguarding

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issues within the organisation. Staff must have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

For some of jobs within the voluntary sector (paid employee or volunteer), a position involving working with children or vulnerable adults is eligible for a DBS check. A DBS check is a process of gathering information about an applicant's possible criminal activity. This includes spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings given by the police. A DBS check is the certificate containing this information. A DBS check will only be requested in specific circumstances, such as when a volunteer has regular contact with vulnerable individuals as a direct result of their position within the organisation.

There are 2 levels of DBS check:-

Enhanced DBS Check - available for positions that were in regulated activity prior to the Protection of Freedoms Act but now fall outside of regulated activity. It will provide details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings.

Enhanced DBS Check for regulated activity - available for positions working in regulated activity and providing details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings. It will also check the DBS Barred list for the relevant group.

All AWF employees are subject to an enhanced DBS check, and enhanced check for regulated activity will be made on a case by case basis depending on the job role and duties.

Disputes

If an applicant wishes to raise a dispute concerning the content of the information released on the DBS Certificate where they believe that the information does not relate to them or that elements of the information are incorrect or irrelevant please guide them to [Disputes](#). This webpage contains information on the two types of dispute - data entry and data source disputes - and how to raise the dispute for each.

Proof of Identity - Identity checks will be undertaken at interview. The organisation must establish that the person is who they say they are. This will be verified by formal photographic identity such as a passport or driving licence together with confirmation of current address.

End of policy

Version	Change	Author	Date
2	Draft to Emily Lown	Verity Pelton	05/02/2015
3	Re-drafted to include safer recruitment and details of how employees will be supported in the event of a reporting a concern and sent to Emily Lown and CEO	Verity Pelton	13/04/2015
4	Approved by CEO and passed to Emily Lown to gain approval from Safer Team	Verity Pelton	07/05/2015
5	NCSB changes incorporated	Verity Pelton	13/10/015
6	Safer logo added	Verity Pelton	06/04/2016
V7	Changes made to 12	L Cole	15/10/21