



Woodland Pathways

Applicant Information & Safer Recruitment Guidance

What to expect when applying to join Woodland Pathways

APPLICANT GUIDE

Date issued: 01 September 2026

Applies to practitioner recruitment and expressions of interest

Contact: office@woodlandpathways.uk

1. Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Woodland Pathways. We provide personalised alternative education in a calm outdoor setting at Shropham Grove, Norfolk. Our learners may have SEND, anxiety, EBSA, SEMH or trauma-related needs, and many have experienced barriers to traditional education.

We welcome applicants from varied professional and personal backgrounds. Formal education qualifications are not essential for every role. We look for people who are safe, dependable, reflective and able to build respectful relationships, and who can bring useful interests, experience or practical skills.

2. The practitioner opportunity

- Work is usually one-to-one or in very small groups.
- Sessions may be practical, academic, creative, outdoor, vocational or wellbeing-focused.
- Current opportunities are offered on a self-employed basis and depend on learner placements and commissioning arrangements.
- The precise days, fee, duties and expectations will be confirmed in the vacancy details and written practitioner agreement.
- Induction and appropriate on-site training are provided; practitioners must also complete required safeguarding training.

3. How to apply

1. Read the Practitioner Role Profile and the policies supplied with the recruitment pack.
2. Complete every section of the Woodland Pathways Candidate Application Form. Write N/A where a question does not apply.
3. Provide a continuous history since leaving school, including education, employment, self-employment, voluntary work, caring, travel and periods not working. Explain all gaps.
4. Give two suitable professional referees and obtain their permission to share their contact details.
5. Return the form securely to office@woodlandpathways.uk by any stated closing date. A CV may be attached but cannot replace the application form.

Need an adjustment?

Tell us if you need the form, interview or selection process adapted because of disability, neurodivergence, health, communication or accessibility needs. Requesting an adjustment will not disadvantage your application.

4. Our safer recruitment process

Woodland Pathways applies safer recruitment procedures to deter, identify and reject people who may be unsuitable to work with children, while treating all applicants fairly and consistently.

Application review and shortlisting

Normally completed by at least two people against the published role criteria. Gaps, inconsistencies and incomplete answers will be identified for clarification.

References

We normally request references before interview where possible. References are sought directly, verified and compared with the application. Open testimonials or references supplied only by the applicant are not accepted as sufficient.

Shortlisted-candidate self-disclosure

After shortlisting, candidates will be asked confidentially for relevant information appropriate to an exempt role. Protected convictions and cautions must not be disclosed.

Online due-diligence search

A proportionate search of publicly available information may be completed for shortlisted candidates. It is not a search of private accounts. Only apparently relevant information is recorded or explored.

Interview and selection

Interviews use structured questions and include safeguarding, motivation, boundaries and scenario-based discussion. We may ask about the employment history, references or online-search findings.

Conditional decision and checks

Any offer or practitioner agreement is conditional until all required checks are completed and judged satisfactory.

Induction and deployment

Practitioners complete safeguarding, conduct, site, health and safety, confidentiality and role-specific induction before unsupervised work.

5. Pre-engagement checks

- Identity and current address.
- Right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Enhanced DBS certificate and Children's Barred List information where the role is regulated activity.
- DBS Update Service status, where used with the applicant's consent and the existing certificate is at the correct level and workforce.
- References, employment/activity history and reasons for leaving.
- Relevant qualifications, professional status, licences or first aid awards where claimed or required.
- Additional overseas criminal-record or professional checks where a person has lived or worked outside the UK.
- Any prohibition, direction, sanction or restriction relevant to the role, where the check is legally appropriate.
- Health or fitness information only after a conditional offer and only to the extent lawful and necessary for the role and reasonable adjustments.

6. DBS, criminal records and barring

Practitioner work normally involves regulated activity with children. It is a criminal offence for a barred person to apply for regulated activity from which they are barred. Woodland Pathways will request the level of DBS check legally appropriate to the role and will not request information it is not entitled to receive.

A criminal record or other information on a DBS certificate does not automatically prevent engagement. Any relevant information is considered individually and fairly, taking account of the nature of the role, seriousness and relevance, time elapsed, circumstances, pattern, evidence of change and safeguarding risk. The applicant will have an opportunity to explain before a decision is made.

Read the separate Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy for full details.

7. References

- One referee must normally be the current or most recent employer.
- If the applicant is not currently working with children, we may also seek a reference from the employer from the most recent relevant work with children.

- School or college references should be authorised or confirmed by the headteacher/principal where appropriate.
- Referees must not be relatives, partners or friends.
- We may contact previous employers not named by the applicant where lawful, necessary and proportionate, normally after informing the applicant.
- Any discrepancy or safeguarding concern must be resolved satisfactorily before engagement.

8. Online searches

Searches are intended to identify publicly available incidents or issues that may warrant discussion at interview. They are not used to seek protected-characteristic information or to make assumptions about private life. Findings are considered in context, verified where possible and kept only where relevant. Candidates may explain or correct information.

9. Equality, fairness and confidentiality

Selection decisions are based on the requirements of the role, safeguarding suitability and the evidence available. Woodland Pathways does not unlawfully discriminate. Recruitment information is shared only with people who need it for the process or a legal/safeguarding purpose and is handled in line with the Recruitment Privacy Notice.

10. Key documents

- Practitioner Role Profile
- Candidate Application Form
- Recruitment Privacy Notice
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

11. Questions

For a recruitment question or reasonable-adjustment request, contact office@woodlandpathways.uk. Please do not send highly sensitive information by ordinary email unless asked to do so through an agreed secure method.