

Policy Number	SP26
Policy Name	Safer Recruitment Policy
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Owner	HR Director
Reviewing Body	OMG

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to define Autism Unlimited’s strategic approach to recruitment and selection activity and to establish a consistent framework for the application of these activities.

Recruiting the best people is vital for our continued success in providing the highest standard for the people we support.

In carrying out our recruitment processes, we are committed to providing a safe environment for the individuals we support by operating safer recruitment practices in line with the statutory requirements and guidance.

We are also committed to ensuring that throughout our recruitment and selection processes no applicant is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, knowledge, experience and skills will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

If an applicant makes the talent team aware at any stage of the recruitment process, that they have a disability then reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure the applicant is not disadvantaged by the process.

2. Safer recruitment

All recruitment must be in line with this policy to ensure that we identify, deter and prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with the individuals we support.

The recruitment of all applicants and volunteers must, without exception, follow the processes of safer recruitment and the team involved have received appropriate safer recruitment training. All offers of employment will be subject to us being satisfied that the applicant or volunteer is a suitable person to

work with the people we support.

All recruitment must be planned to ensure that there is adequate time available to recruit safely.

Any person who becomes aware that this policy is not being followed during recruitment must inform the Talent team immediately.

3. Advertising

Any vacant position will be advertised via the appropriate channels to attract the best talent.

All advertisements will have the following statement about safeguarding the people we support and the requirement to have a DBS check:

“Autism Unlimited are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the individuals we support. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this. All successful candidates will be subject to disclosure and barring service checks along with other relevant employment checks”.

The advert will detail the safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with the individuals we support and whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are ‘protected’, so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account

4. Application process

All applicants are required to apply via our applicant tracking portal. CVs will be accepted in non-education setting roles.

All applicants for Futures and Portfield School will be required to submit our application form. The application form collects the following information:

- Supporting statement from the candidate on the qualities and skills they can bring to the role
- Education & Training history
- Employment history
- Details of any gaps in employment
- Details of two references
- Any reasonable adjustments we can consider to support the candidate through the application process.

The application form also includes a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)

5. Short-listing

Applicants will be short-listed against the requirements of the qualifications and skills and qualities listed on the job description.

Where possible, the same people who shortlist should also carry out the interviews. In our education settings this will involve at least 2 people.

The short listing panel are responsible for scrutinising each application and identifying any gaps in employment or other areas that may affect an applicant's suitability to work with the individuals we support. A satisfactory explanation for any concerns must be obtained from the applicant during the interview process.

In our education settings, once we have shortlisted candidates, we ask successful people to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage.

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

6. References

All offers of employment will be conditional upon receipt of at least two satisfactory written references. References will:

- include the applicant's current or most recent employer.
- be directly from the referee;
- not be accepted if they are from a personal email address.

In some cases a referee may, for whatever reason, either refuse or simply not reply to a reference request made. Follow up requests should be made and the candidate should be made aware that a reference cannot be obtained. This allows the candidate to chase the referee themselves. If after repeated requests a reference has still not been received, copies of all correspondence (e.g. chase up emails) should be printed and placed on the HR file. As at least 2 suitable references must be held on file, the candidate should provide details of a suitable alternative referee.

For all education services, we will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

7. Interviews

An interview must take place before any appointments are made for all posts.

All those involved in interviewing must be appropriately trained. At least one person on the interview panel must have passed the appropriate safer recruitment training via our online training portal.

The purpose of the interview is to assess the merits of each applicant against the job description and to establish their suitability for the post.

Interviews should be conducted with a minimum of two interviewers on the panel to enable one interviewer to assess the applicant, observe and make notes whilst the applicant talks to the other interviewer.

Before the interview commences the interview panel should have:

- Prepared appropriate questions for the role;
- identified any areas for further probing
- agreed assessment criteria and decided a structure to the interview and established which member of the panel will ask which questions;
- a set of common questions relating to the requirements of the post will be asked of each applicant.

Their response will determine whether that is followed up through further questioning; any gaps in employment history or declaration of a criminal record or caution must be explored further during the interview process.

8. Other selection methods

In addition to a face to face interview with the interview panel a variety of other selection methods may be used, such as:

- observation of their practice;
- one or more additional panel interviews;
- a presentation;

Those responsible for deciding the arrangements for recruitment to a specific post will determine the selection method(s).

Candidates will be informed in advance if any selection methods are to be used in addition to a face to face interview and what these will be.

9. Pre- employment checks

An offer of appointment to the successful applicant will be conditional upon the following:

- satisfied that any gaps in employment have been sufficiently explained;
- receipt of at least two satisfactory written references (one of which must be their current or most recent employer);
- verification of the applicant's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness;
- verification of clean driving licence if the role requires the candidate to drive;
- verification of qualifications where relevant;
- verification of professional status where applicable. For teachers, this will include checking that the individual has the required teaching qualification and has successfully completed any statutory induction, if required, through the Teacher Regulation Agency Employer Access Online;
- satisfactory DBS check at the adequate level for the role;
- verification that they are not subject to a prohibition order;
- verification of right to work in the United Kingdom;
- criminal record information from overseas;

All checks must be confirmed in writing, and retained on the personnel file.

Where a colleague joins us before all of their pre-employment checks have been returned, this must be approved by the most senior manager in the service and a risk assessment must be completed and held on their personnel file.

For all education services we will record all information on the checks carried out on the single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

10. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

We will carry out DBS checks for new appointments before the employee or volunteer starts work. The level of check required is determined depending on the role the person will be undertaking and if this includes any regulated activity.

In exceptional circumstances a new employee or unsupervised volunteer may be able to start before the required DBS check has been received. A risk assessment will be completed by the line manager ensuring that appropriate supervision is in place until the DBS check has been received.

A renewal of the DBS check is required every 3 years. If the colleague has continuously subscribed to the DBS online update service then a check of this constitutes as a renewal.

11. Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

a. Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work for us has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity

- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at our premises.

b. Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity

Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

13. Breaches of the policy

Any instances of this policy not being adhered to will be taken very seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Any complaint in relation to this policy, including its application, will be managed through the complaints policy or grievance policy (for existing employees).

14. Record keeping and data protection

All written records of interviews, application forms and reasons for appointment or non-appointment will be kept by the charity within our applicant tracking system for 6 months.

Records will be treated as confidential and kept for no longer than necessary in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

15. Review of policy

This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the HR Director. The application and outcomes of this policy will be monitored to ensure it is working effectively.

16. Equal opportunities

Autism Unlimited are committed to providing equality of opportunity at all stages of the recruitment and selection process and ensuring that candidates are treated fairly and lawfully throughout the process. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation or trade union membership.

Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.