



# **Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy**

***Version 1:0***

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**Approved by:**

**Date:**

## **Purpose**

Channels and Choices aims to be a Centre of Excellence in Child Care including Fostering Education and Residential Children's Homes. All of our settings are overseen and managed by experienced qualified staff and a highly trained staff team. Our objective is to provide young people placed in our care with the highest quality residential care and education provision. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff to share this commitment.

We recognise that staff are key to the organisation's continued success. The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide a framework for the recruitment and selection of staff which promotes best practice and facilitates the selection, attraction and retention of the best possible people through a fair and merit based process and meets 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance.

The policy aims to provide clear guidance to managers in relation to both the selection and appointment of staff. This policy promotes and supports good practice for those with responsibility for recruitment and aims to ensure the process is free from bias and discrimination.

This policy and procedures aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Recruit staff with the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience in order to meet the Company's current and future needs.

Work to a fair and effective recruitment procedure, which is consistent with employment legislation, and with relevant legislation governing Children's Homes (The Children Act 1989; Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015; Children's Homes: Quality Standards for Children's Homes), along with educational legislation, as well as with the Company's wider policies and practices and with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance.

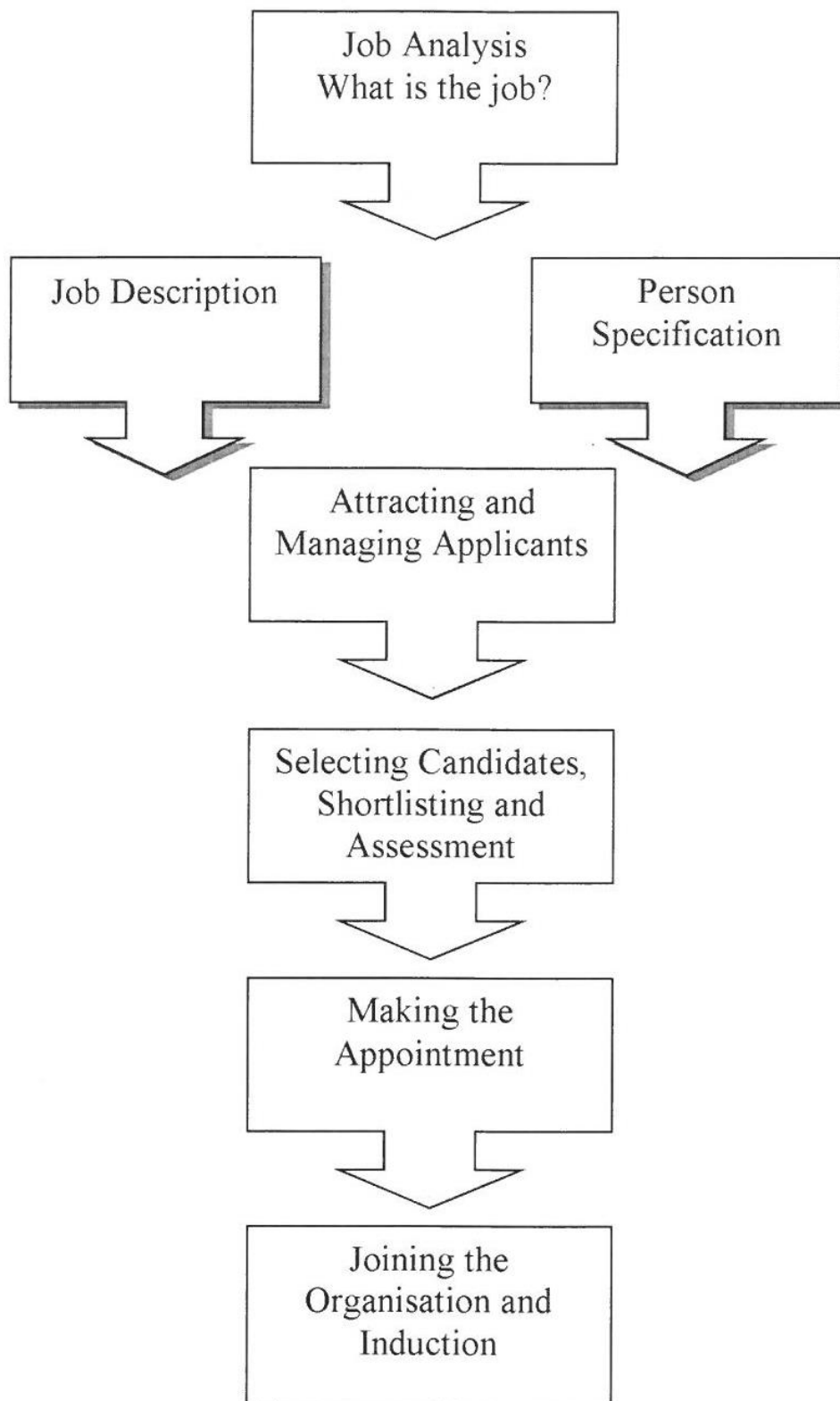
- Develop and enhance the public image of the Company and become an employer of choice.

## **General Principles**

- This policy is designed to assist with the recruitment and selection of the best candidate for a vacancy.
- It is the responsibility of each Manager to ensure that this policy is carefully followed and members of their staff are made aware of it as appropriate.

- Advice on any aspect of this policy or procedure is available from Human Resources.
- Normally appointments must be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview.
- Channels and Choices will seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and the organisation.
- Channels and Choices will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment and other appropriate legislation.
- Appropriate training, development and support will be available to those involved in recruitment and selection activities. Any member of staff involved in the selection of staff should satisfy him or herself that he/she is appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.
- Those involved in interviewing must be trained in Safer Recruitment procedures.
- All candidates will be treated fairly, equitably, equally and with respect. The candidate experience should be positive, irrespective of the outcome.
- Channels and Choices promote best practice in recruitment and selection, and aim to ensure the process is cost effective.
- If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and where possible, ensure they are not directly involved in the recruitment and selection of the individual. Internal candidates or others personally known to the interview panel must be treated in exactly the same way as all other candidates.
- All documentation relating to applicants will be treated and processed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

## The Process



*Diagram adapted from CfPD Factsheet on Recruitment available at [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)*

## **New Vacancies**

- The occurrence of a vacancy (whether it is a new vacancy or a replacement for a leaver) is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and level. The job should be analysed in order to determine the business requirements.
- Before recruitment gets underway, it is essential that relevant approval to appoint is gained from the Directors. All staff regardless of whether they are temporary or permanent must be selected on the basis of appropriate criteria and merit, and a record of the process and decision must be kept and returned to Human Resources.

## **Job Description (details of the role)**

- A job description and ideally a person specification must be produced or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled.
- The job description should accurately reflect the elements of the post, to include the purpose of the job, duties and responsibilities, accountability and such like.
- The person specification should state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience for the job, all of which should be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants. Care should be taken when writing the person specification to ensure that criteria used do not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of applicants. For further information on this please contact Human Resources.
- The job description and person specification together should provide a full picture of what the job entails. Further particulars for the job should also be made available for prospective employees through links to the Company website and so forth.

## **Advertising**

- Advertisements will be gender neutral (save where gender is a genuine occupational qualification for the position). All adverts should make it clear that the Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not discriminate on the grounds of disability, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, religious belief, caste, maternity, pregnancy or age.
- Where practicable, all vacancies should be advertised internally on notice-boards

as well as externally, and on the Channels and Choices website. This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff. In exceptional circumstances the need to advertise may be waived, for example for specialist positions or in the case of internal promotions.

- Advertisements should contain a safeguarding statement as per below, as well as basic information such as job title; remuneration details; specific Company information; how to obtain additional information (further particulars and so forth); general location of the role; basic details relating to the job description and person specification, and a closing date.

*Channels and Choices is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Any offer of employment and continued employment is conditional upon receipt of an Enhanced Disclosures and Barring Service check, satisfactory references, a full employment history check and evidence of right to work in the UK.*

- All candidates will be required to complete the Channels and Choices application form (ensuring a consistent approach can be applied to short-listing).
- The application form is gender and race neutral. Appropriate applicants may be asked if they suffer from a disability, in which case consideration should be given to the disability in considering whether any steps may be taken or adjustments made to the interview process or to the job functions of the position that is vacant. The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 require those working in children's homes to be "physically and mentally fit for the purposes of the work he is to perform".
- Candidates will be required to provide a full employment history since leaving education, including accounting for any gaps in employment. If they have worked with children or vulnerable adults in the past, their reasons for leaving previous posts and employment dates will also be verified where practicable. Specific forms are available for this purpose from Human Resources.
- Applicants should be provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision regarding their suitability for the role - this would normally include access to the job description and person specification, and also to further particulars for the role and wider Company information.
- Staff who have been in an acting position that subsequently becomes vacant will have to apply for the position when it is advertised, but in such cases the position may be advertised on an internal basis only.
- All advertised vacancies will be placed on the Company's website. All advertising

must be cost-effective and agreed in advance with the Directors. A variety of sources should be used according to the position, for example recruitment websites, newspapers and social networking sites as appropriate.

## **Processing Applications and Short-listing**

- After the closing date or at regular intervals short-listing can commence. The recruiting manager in conjunction with HR should arrange an interview panel to assist with both the short-listing and the subsequent interviews. Applications can then be assessed to determine who is to be called for interview. Where possible, at least two members of the interview panel should undertake the task of short-listing. Short-listing decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the job description and person specification. Care should be taken to avoid dismissing applicants who appear to be over-qualified. Assumptions should not be made about their reasons for applying for the post as this may eliminate an otherwise exemplary candidate.
- The original applications for all applicants, together with a written note of reasons for short-listing or rejecting applicants must be retained for a minimum of 6 months from the date that decision are made in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal. A proforma is available from Human Resources to assist with short-listing.
- The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process. All data must be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

## **Interviewing and Assessment**

- Interviews should normally be carried out by a minimum of two people. For most positions a panel interview is recommended. All interviews for one post should be conducted by the same panel to ensure a consistent and fair approach. Interviewers should familiarise themselves with applications prior to the interviews. All interviewers should have undertaken Safer Recruitment training, and at least one panel member should have undertaken discrimination awareness training.
- Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role and the organisation. Those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.
- It is recommended that a range of selection methods, that are suitable for assessing both the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification, are used as this will enhance objective decision making which is difficult through interview alone.
- Interview questions and the structure of the interview should be consistently applied to all candidates, and should be based on the job description and person



specification, and used to assess the candidate's suitability to work with children. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory. Familiarity with the vacancy and preparation for the interview is key to successful interviewing. Sample questions are available from Human Resources.

- Other forms of assessment may include group exercises, a tour of a house, questions from a resident young person, presentations and so forth, all of which will be agreed in advance by the panel, and be appropriate for the level of the role. Further advice and examples can be sought from Human Resources.
- Once the format for assessment has been agreed, candidates should be contacted, allowing as much notice as possible for them to attend. Care must be taken when initiating contacts with applicants that all are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to interview, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information. When contacting short-listed candidates, letters, phone calls or e-mails should include:
  - date, time and place of the interview
  - instructions on how and where to find the interview venue
  - a request that they contact the author of the letter/message if they have any particular requirements or to discuss the interview facilities (related to access to the venue or any other need related to a disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010)
  - if appropriate, details of any test or presentation they will be required to take or anything they should bring with them (e.g., examples of work, a group exercise)
  - a request that they bring at least 3 forms of ID with them to complete a DBS check and to demonstrate their right to work in the UK (see below)
- The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it an offence to employ anyone who does not have permission to be in, or work in, the UK. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, it is the interviewing Manager's responsibility to ask all appointees if they have the right to work in the UK and to advise them that if offered a position, they will be required to produce evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British. It is therefore a requirement to ask all candidates to produce evidence of their right to work in the UK (for example, a British passport). In order

to make the recruitment process as efficient as possible, candidates will also be asked to bring at least 3 forms of ID to interview so that they can complete a DBS check.

- Notes recording the salient points of the interview should be taken, ideally by the interviewers, so that they can refer back to these when assessing candidates against the person specification and making decisions. Notes of the interview and any other notes on the candidate taken during the recruitment and selection process should be passed back to Human Resources following the selection process and will be kept for a minimum of 12 months following the selection process. An interview assessment form should be completed for each candidate.
- In the event that a candidate requests feedback about their performance in the selection process this should be arranged by Human Resources along with the interviewing manager.
- It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted and advise them that they have not been successful on this occasion, but if this is not possible due to limited resources, the job advertisement should make clear that after a certain period, if they have not heard from Channels and Choices, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

### **Decisions to Appoint**

- Following interviews and any other selection methods such as group exercises and such like, the panel should discuss and compare the ratings of all interviewed candidates and make a decision based on merit. A written reason for each decision should be made, and candidates should be notified of the outcome as soon as possible. Selection decisions will be retained for a minimum of 12 months after the decision date.
- Successful candidates should be made a verbal offer, ensuring that any offer is clearly conditional on the receipt of two satisfactory references (one of which must be from the current or previous employer) and an Enhanced Disclosures and Barring Service check, as well as evidence that the individual has the right to work in the UK, verification of employment history and where the role is conditional upon certain qualifications, the original certificates must be produced. Candidates who will be working directly with young persons will not be able to commence work until these are received.
- For any roles where the employee does not work directly with young persons, they will not be left unsupervised until such checks have been successfully completed.
- Verbal offers should be promptly followed up with a written offer, and DBS checks,

references and verification of employment history should be requested as soon as possible after receiving verbal acceptance of the post. These often take a long time to be processed and can delay start dates. Where possible, references will be requested prior to the interviews taking place, with suitable permission.

- If the role requires specific qualifications, evidence of these must also be sought prior to the candidate commencing employment, and a verified copy should be maintained on the individual's personal file.
- Where the successful candidate is disabled, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on their disability in consultation with them. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. Channels and Choices has a duty to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to working practices, or premises, or to enable access to goods, facilities and services by disabled people. A risk assessment will be required under these circumstances.
- A full employment history should be obtained from each candidate. This should have been included in the application form, but if there are gaps this should be addressed directly with the individual, and an explanation should be placed on file. Managers should use the Employment History Timeline document for this (available from Human Resources). All dates should be cross checked against references and the application form, and any discrepancies should be addressed immediately.

## **References**

- The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. References will not be accepted from relatives except in exceptional circumstances. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training: preferably in a supervisory capacity. A reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer. If two employment references are not available, a personal reference should be obtained. References should be in writing on headed paper where possible, and should be clearly verified by telephone using the appropriate verification form. If after requesting references in writing this is not forthcoming, a follow up telephone call should be made and on these occasions a telephone reference may be obtained. When verifying references, it is important to ask whether or not the referee would have any concerns with the candidate working with vulnerable young people. For further guidance, please refer to Human Resources, and also to the Guidance Notes for Managers on setting up staff files.
- References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence' and placed on the individual's personal file once individuals join the organisation.

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

- Channels and Choices require staff to have Enhanced DBS checks, due to the nature of the business, and for appointments in school and all those engaged in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS Certificate which includes barred list information. Applicants are required to disclose any 'unspent' and "spent" criminal convictions as part of their application, in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This would also be verified at interview. Further information relating to satisfactory DBS checks is available from Human Resources.
- Other checks and evidence made are:
  - Prohibition check (using Employer Access Online Service), reference requests, verification of identity, the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their responsibilities, right to work in the UK and verification of professional qualifications.

## **DBS Update Service**

- When applicants/post-holders have a DBS check they can now subscribe to the DBS Update Service. For a small fee (currently £13) applicants can have their DBS certificate kept up to date and take it with them from role to role, within the same workforce, where the same level and type of check is required. This can dramatically speed up the recruitment process and is very cost effective.
- Applicants can join the service online at [www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service](http://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service) the employer can not subscribe to this on behalf of individuals. This must be done within 19 calendar days from the date of issue of a DBS result.
- Further information is available online at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide> or from Human Resources.

## **Use of Agencies**

- From time to time it may be necessary to use recruitment agencies to recruit staff. It is essential that there is a contract in place with the agency. Written confirmation from the staffing agency should be obtained which demonstrates the candidate's suitability to work with young people, and that the appropriate DBS checks, identity checks, employment history checks and references have been carried out and are satisfactory prior to any individual working for the Company. Also, checks will be made to ensure that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person.

## **Single Central Record**

- All staff who work at the school; the proprietors, members of the management committee, contractors, are included in the single central record which shows the date on which all checks were made, the person carrying out the check and their role.

### **Existing Staff**

- If the company has concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children, the company should carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.
- If any member of staff has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child and has been removed from working in regulated activity, they will be referred to the DBS who will consider whether to bar the person.
- If a teacher is dismissed or they have left after serious misconduct and would have been dismissed if they had stayed, this should be referred to the Secretary of State to investigate the case.

### **Induction and Probation**

- All new staff will have a probationary period of 6 months, during which they will be closely supervised and supported in order to ensure that they are capable of performing their role properly. A mid probation review will also normally take place after 3 months.
- Employees who successfully pass their probationary period will receive confirmation of this by letter.
- In cases where there is a problem during the probationary period, the staff member may not be subject to either the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or the Capability Policy and Procedure. Rather, the process will be managed as described below.
- In cases where there is doubt about the capability and/or performance of the staff member, the probationary period may be extended. In these cases, the staff member will be made aware of the reasons for extending the probationary period and will receive any necessary training and support to assist them in achieving the required standard. In addition, if work performance is not up to the required standard, or the individual is considered to be generally unsuitable for the role, employment may be terminated at any time with appropriate notice.
- Upon joining the organisation, staff will undergo a thorough induction lasting approximately 6 months (i.e. the duration of their probation period). During this period, they will be introduced to the main duties and responsibilities of their post;

receive appropriate training and support and regular supervision.

- This policy will be subject to regular review and updates. Any queries should be directed to Human Resources.
- Process Overview - Preparing to Recruit Assess requirements in conjunction with **HR:**
  - *Job Analysis - Job Description/Person Specification*
  - *Seek appropriate approval from Directors*
- Recruitment and Selection
  - *Agree appropriate search techniques (advertise/agencies)*
  - *Shortlist*
  - *Assessments*
  - *Selection meeting*
  - *Offers*
  - *References /DBS checks / Employment history checks/Evidence of right to work in the UK*
  - *Appointment*
  - *Appropriate training (Safeguarding, Team Teach and other appropriate training)*
  - *Induction/probation*