



## Safer Recruitment Policy

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## 1. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of Oldbury Cottage Care Farm's (OCCF's) Safer Recruitment Policy is:

- To publicly demonstrate our commitment to safer recruitment.
- To achieve safe procedures for the recruitment of staff/ workers, temporary workers and volunteers.
- To ensure compliance with all statutory requirements and relevant recommendations and guidance, including the Code of Practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- To ensure that OCCF meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.
- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equitably and consistently.

The objectives of the policy and this procedure are to:

- Establish and assign clear accountability for safer recruitment at OCCF.
- Ensure that all relevant staff and directors are aware of their individual responsibilities for safer recruitment.
- Comply with all or any relevant regulations. as outlined below.
- Manage the safeguarding risk if safer recruitment and compliance is not followed.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All members of staff (including Bank workers) directly recruited and employed by OCCF.
- Agency, self-employed contractors and any other temporary workers providing services to OCCF.



- Volunteers providing workforce support or services.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Directors:**

- Directors are responsible for ensuring that the procedures and policies in place for the safe recruitment of all staff and anyone working on behalf of OCCF, are in accordance with the relevant guidance. In addition, to ensure that all staff, contractors, and agency workers are compliant with the policy.

#### **Manager:**

- The Manager is responsible for recruiting staff and is responsible for implementing OCCF's safer recruitment procedures correctly, at every part of the recruitment process. This ensures all staff and volunteers applying to work at OCCF undergo appropriate checks, promoting the welfare of children and young people at all stages of the process, as the primary driver of this policy

#### **Employees:**

- Responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy.

### **4. Procedure**



The Safer Recruitment Policy informs how we safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care, at every stage of the process, including: planning, deciding upon whether the post meets the criteria, and ensuring that the advertisement makes clear our commitment to safeguarding. The policy continues to detail the full recruitment journey: authorisation; advertising; shortlisting; interviewing; appointing; pre-employment checks (according to statutory requirements); induction and ongoing employment.

The policy demonstrates a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants.

### **Recruitment and selection procedure:**

- Initiating and Authorising the Recruitment Process: The manager wishing to recruit must first consider whether the work can be covered in another way, e.g., distributing all or part of the duties amongst existing staff. If the role cannot be covered by alternative arrangements, approval to recruit replacement posts must be sought from the Directors.
- On receiving the above, a vacancy meeting will be arranged between the relevant director(s) and the manager, in order to discuss and review all relevant documents (e.g. candidate briefing pack and job advert) as well as plan the recruitment process and timelines (e.g. closing and interview dates; interview and assessment requirements and arrangements, etc.). Salary details must be confirmed for inclusion on the job advert.

### **The Advertisement:**

- This will include a statement about OCCF's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It will state the need for the successful candidate to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) certificate at the appropriate level.

The job advert will also include:

- Job title.
- Location.
- Salary and contract hours (including pro rata salary).



- Reference to OCCF and what we do and our staff benefits, along with a safeguarding statement to protect our children and young people by completing enhanced DBS checks.
- Reference to the requirement that OCCF application form must be completed, for candidates to be considered for a role. This statement will also explain that any gaps in employment will be examined as part of the shortlisting process and will be further explored during the interview process.
- Closing date.
- Interview date(s) - wherever possible.
- Relevant contact details to receive any enquiries.
- Relevant supporting documents.
- The advertisement will make no direct reference to age, sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, or belief as stated in the Equality Act 2010. However, it is acknowledged that by exception there may be a genuine occupational requirement for person(s) of a specific group to support a child or young person that cannot be achieved through other reasonable means. An objective justification will need to be completed and approved by a director before any advertising takes place.
- To provide existing employees the opportunity to apply (should they wish to do so) all roles should be advertised internally (for a minimum of one week). If a member of staff wishes to apply for a role, it is strongly recommended that they inform their manager of their intentions to do so, to promote an open and transparent working environment and recruitment process.
- Posts may be advertised externally for a minimum of two weeks. This will be done via the OCCF website, social media, and other relevant local outlets.

### **The application process:**

- All applicants must complete OCCF's application form (either in writing or online) in order for their application to be considered for shortlisting and to provide consent for their personal details to be processed by OCCF, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and Data Protection Act (2018).
- Applicants do not need to submit a C.V. to complement their application form - the form contains all the relevant data fields required; however, a C.V. on its own will not be accepted and as such, will not be considered for shortlisting.



- As part of the application process, candidates must complete the application form, to obtain the candidate's employment history; qualifications; suitability for the role; and a declaration, whilst ensuring a fair screening and shortlisting process. Information provided in the application form will also contribute to required pre-employment and safeguarding checks for the successful candidate(s).

### **Candidate Briefing Pack:**

The candidate briefing pack will include:

- The main duties and responsibilities of the role.
- The required person specification for the role and for shortlisting purposes, including:
  - Essential and desirable qualifications, taking careful consideration to minimise essential requirements to ensure we are accessible for the widest group of candidates.
  - Any relevant professional registration.
  - Relevant professional experience and expertise.
  - Any other essential and/or desirable requirements needed to perform the role, along with the competencies, skills, and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate.
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion statement.

### **Applying for a Position:**

- The positions for which candidates are applying are likely to involve significant opportunity for access to children, young people and vulnerable adults, it is important that applicants provide legally accurate and transparent answers. Successful applicants will be required to complete an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, which will disclose all unspent convictions and adult cautions and any spent convictions or adult cautions that would not be protected.
- Whether the candidate is currently working (or has previously worked) with children/vulnerable adults or not, OCCF will ask their current and/or previous employer(s) whether the candidate has been the subject of any safeguarding allegations or concerns [and if so, the outcome of any enquiry] as part of the referencing process.



### **Shortlisting & Selection:**

- Immediately after the closing date, the director(s) and manager will be able to shortlist the received applications. Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two people both of which should also be involved in the interview process. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment and selection process knows a candidate personally, they must disclose this as a conflict of interest as soon as they are aware and avoid any further involvement in the process.
- The shortlisting panel must discuss feedback either verbally or in writing on all candidates, confirming which candidates have been shortlisted for interview. Non-shortlisted candidates should be returned at the same time, with reasons for rejection and provide feedback, should the candidate request it.

### **Interviews:**

- The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification and explore their suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk.
- Interview questions and any required assessments/interview tasks, will be discussed during the initial vacancy meeting (held at the beginning of the recruitment process) with the final version(s) produced by the manager.
- All candidates must be asked the same questions, with summary notes of replies recorded. All applicants must be asked questions relating to safeguarding and/or to determine their suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, where it is relevant to the role.
- Each member of the interview panel is responsible for individually completing and scoring their set of interview questions for each candidate, detailing the interview outcome. The panel may decide to pool their scores and complete one form per candidate.
- Scoring and selection must be as objective as possible, defensible, and non-discriminatory. Interview questions should be returned to manager immediately after the interviews.
- Interviews should be held face to face, to fully explore the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people, as well as his/her suitability for the role.
- The recruitment panel will arrange and administer all interviews and liaise with candidates throughout this process. The interviewing panel will prepare all





necessary interview packs prior to interview (unless separate arrangements have previously been agreed for specific roles).

- During the interview, one member of the panel must check the candidate's employment history, to clarify any significant, unexplained employment gaps and check time spent working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. At this point, the panel should also ask whether the candidate would like to highlight anything about their employment history to the panel, as well as explain that if successful, candidates will be expected to complete a full Employment History in detail to include reasons for leaving roles which involved working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. This information must be noted and fed back to the manager, to check these details against pre-employment checks conducted, should the candidate be successful.
- Panel members should discuss and agree on the appointment of the successful candidate(s) within a reasonable timeframe. OCCF should request and obtain two professional references for each candidate. Ordinarily, one of these should be from the individual's current and/ or most recent employer.

#### **Job Offers:**

- Offers of employment must not be made at interview. In agreement with the recruitment panel the manager will make a verbal job offer and agree a provisional start date, considering all required pre-employment checks and induction programme dates. Any additional special requirements/ variations, e.g., notice period, probation period or working out of office hours. The recruitment panel will also contact the unsuccessful candidates, providing feedback where requested and based on the detail included from the interview questions.
- Once the verbal job offer has been accepted, the manager will draft and issue the prospective candidate's offer letter and employment contract.

#### **Pre-employment Checks:**

- No employee may start work at OCCF until all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. In exceptional circumstances, i.e., where the business need may be deemed critical, a member of staff who is not to be employed in regulated activity (i.e. not child or adult facing) may be able to commence work remotely prior to the completion of the DBS process, if all other pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. This must be approved in writing by a relevant director and the manager.



- All pre-employment checks must be carried out by the manager, including but not limited to:
  - Proof of I.D.: photographic proof of identification is required for all candidates; original documentation must be seen by a member of the recruitment panel, prior to joining OCCF.
  - Application Form: all individuals employed directly by OCCF must complete an application form.
  - All internal opportunities, require current staff to complete an application form to be considered for the role.
  - Employment History: all new staff are required to provide a full employment history, dating back from the last 10 years. Any employment must be documented, along with reasons for leaving all previous employment when working with children and/ or vulnerable adults. The completed employment history must be used to check against dates provided by referees, with discrepancies explored and clarified by both referees and the new appointee.
  - Professional References: professional references should cover the last three years of employment as a minimum and must be obtained from two independent referees. One of the professional references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer, to assess an applicant's suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Permission will be gained from the candidate before requesting any references. When professional references are not available, academic and/or volunteer references may be sought, as alternatives. Character references should only be used in exceptional circumstances, e.g., if it's the individual's first job from leaving school/ college.
  - Right to Work: all staff must hold the right to work within the UK to satisfy employment law requirements; original documentation evidencing the new appointee's right to work must be seen. Evidence is then kept on the new appointee's personnel file.
  - Visa/ Residence Permits: where applicable, overseas recruits must provide original Visa/ Residence Permit documents to be checked and copied by the recruitment panel. The copy taken must be kept on their personnel file, along with the completed Home Office Right to Work Checklist; dates and restrictions must be checked and recorded, to ensure that any required repeat checks are conducted, prior to the expiry date.
  - Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Check: under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, we have a legal responsibility to ensure that we carry



out checks on anyone engaged in regulated activity. However, these checks must only be carried out against the appropriate Barred List, i.e. Children's, Adult's or both, depending upon the requirements of the role. In line with the Disclosure & Barring Service Checks Policy, no staff member should commence in post until the completion of the DBS check (where relevant).

- Certificate of Good Conduct/ Overseas Police Check: in addition to a DBS Check, any new appointee who has resided in another country for more than three months within the last 10 years, will be subject to a Certificate of Good Conduct/ Overseas Police Check from that country (where available). In conjunction with the above, for those who have recently moved to the UK, a DBS check should be completed within three to six months of arriving in the country. Where a Certificate of Good Conduct/ Overseas Police Check is delayed and the certificate has not yet been issued, a candidate may be permitted to start, if all other pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. A Risk Assessment will be completed, with safeguarding procedures put in place to ensure the new appointee is appropriately supervised, until the required check is completed; the new appointee must be made aware of and agree to these procedures.
- Occupational Health Check: all successful candidates must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire, prior to starting their role. The information contained within the questionnaire is confidential and must be returned directly to the manager, where it will be reviewed to ascertain that the new appointee is physically, mentally and emotionally capable of carrying out the duties of the role. Should there be any concerns, or any additional information required (e.g. vaccination details) manager will liaise directly with the new appointee.
- Qualifications: original documentation of all essential qualifications, as listed in the candidate briefing pack, must be checked by the manager, with a copy taken and placed on the new appointee's personnel file. In some cases, where a candidate may not hold the required qualifications, relevant and equivalent professional experience may be deemed acceptable, if competently demonstrated through the interview process. Where this is the case, a Note to File will be produced and signed by the manager, to add to the new appointee's personnel file.

### **Induction and probation:**

- All new appointees are required to undertake an induction which requires them to complete an induction checklist. This ensures that they have read (and understood) all OCCF policies and procedures, whilst giving them the opportunity to raise any questions or discuss concerns regarding this and/or their role.



- Likewise, this is also a tool for the manager to ensure that new appointees are fully up to date with current policies, procedures, guidelines or legislation, and ensure that as an employer OCCF are upholding our duty of care to both the new appointee and any child or young person.
- The probationary period at OCCF for contracted new appointees is 3 months, in which time they must demonstrate competence and diligence in their role, adhering to current OCCF policies, procedures and guidelines plus relevant legislation pertaining to the care of children and young people. Where bank staff are employed, the same criteria apply, however the period of probation will be over 13 attended sessions. This is due to the ad-hoc nature of their employment schedule, which typically can have longer periods of non-attendance.

## 5. Sign-off

Signature	Position	Date
	Director	
	Director	
	Director	