

Child Protection Policy

We are committed to practice which protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

This policy is based on the following principles:

The welfare of the child is paramount;

• All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;

• All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;

• All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Person with responsibility for child protection.

• Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

We will aim to safeguard children by:

• Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

• Appointing a named child protection lead for children

• Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.

• Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

• Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.

• Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.

• We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers
- Recruitment of Staff and volunteers
- Supervision of organisational activities
- Photography, publications, trips away and transportation
- Bullying

1. Definitions of abuse

These definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness,



fabricated or induced illness in children or "Munchausen Syndrome by proxy" after the person who first identified this situation.

A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

Note

Recent guidance notes other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organisation caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.



2. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- scalds
- Injuries which have not received medical attention

• Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food,

untreated illnesses, inadequate care

Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

Emotional signs of abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include;

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour



Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they can not tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

3. What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

1. You must report the concerns immediately to the designated person Shelly Quinton-Hulme 07718287131

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The role of the designated person is to:

• Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information.

• Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.

• They should also consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services department or the NSPCC to clarify any doubts or worries.

• The designated person should make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.

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2. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

3. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.

Allegations of physical injury or neglect

If a child has a symptom of physical injury or neglect the designated person will:

1. Contact the Multi Agency Referral and Assessment Team (MARAT) on 0161 912 5125 for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child. The parents should not be informed by the organisation in these circumstances.

2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.

4. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the parent/care/guardian fails to act the designated person should in case of real concern contact social services for advice.

5. Where the designated person is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice from the Local Children's Safeguarding Board will be sought.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the designated person will:

1. Contact the MARAT duty social worker for children and families directly. The designated person will not speak to the parent (or anyone else)

2. If the designated person is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance then advice from the Local Children's Safeguarding Board will be sought.

3. Under no circumstances is the designated person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act.

4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the designated person, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.

4. Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

• Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said

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• Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be share with others-do not promise to keep secrets

Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace

• Ask questions for clarification only, and at all time avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

• Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated

Helpful statements to make

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- Its not your fault
- I will help you

Do not say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises

5. What to do after a child has talked to you about abuse

The procedure

1. Make comprehensive notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told) you should write down exactly what the child has said and what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered) You should record the dates, times and when you made the record. All hand written notes should be kept securely.

You should use the form "Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse".

2. You should report your discussion with the designated person as soon as possible. If this person is implicated you need to report to (second designated person) If both are implicated report to Social Services.

3. You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.

4. After a child has disclosed abuse the designated persons should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social MARAT to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

6. Safer Recruitment Policy

FOVPS operates a Safer Recruitment Policy to ensure as far as is reasonably possible, that all staff and volunteers are appropriate people to work with children and vulnerable people.



7. Allegations against a member of staff

We will assure all staff/volunteers that we will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

• If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.

• If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Person or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse

• Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

• The Designated person will refer the allegation to MARAT who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

• The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from MARAT.

- If the Designated Person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or Chair who will refer the allegation to MARAT.
- 3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

• The Designated Person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

• Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

8. Supervisory arrangements for the management of activities and services.

We will aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:

Our team members will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.

Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every unaccompanied child attending our ongoing projects/activities.

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Where possible our team members should not be alone with a child, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful

Team members should escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian.

We recognise that physical touch between adults and children can be healthy and acceptable in public places. However our team members will be discouraged from this in circumstances where an adult or child is left alone.

All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in both attitude language and actions.

9. Photographing, videoing and filming.

Publications and websites are a great way to promote the achievements of children, however, there is evidence that some people have used activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. Some children may be subject to statutory Child Protection measures and to reveal their whereabouts may place them at risk. The following measures are recommended as good practice and will contribute to a child's safe participation in your organisation:

Consent should always be obtained from the parent and child

Anyone wishing to photograph or film children must obtain permission from the Designated Person for the organisation

No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions are to be permitted unless this is absolutely necessary and has been approved in advance by the child, parent and Designated Person

The organisation reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated

People are made aware where they can report concerns about the use of photographs and films i.e. the Child Protection Officer for the organisation and/or the police

Designate a child protection officer for the trip someone to co-ordinate the arrangements to safeguard the safety and welfare of children during the trip and to act as the main contact for dealing with any concerns about the safety and welfare of children whilst away from home

10. Publications and websites

Always obtain consent from the child and parent before displaying pictures or information

• Never include personal information that could identify a child or place a child at risk e.g. full name, home address, e-mail address, telephone number, dates, place and times activities take place. Instead give the contact details of a group leader who can deal with requests for information about the organisation

• Never depict children in a provocative, demeaning or tasteless manner.

11. Transporting children and trips away

• Request written parental consent and ensure vehicles are correctly insured.

• Inform another member of the organisation that you are transporting a child giving details of the route and the anticipated length of journey.

• Take all reasonable safety measures e.g. child in the back seat, seatbelts worn, booster seat where necessary. For further information visit: www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/

• Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children



• Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other members and parents

- Ensure the accommodation and sleeping arrangements are suitable
- Always have a list of emergency contacts and medical information available

• Ensure that there has been a thorough assessment of the risks and that appropriate adultchild ratios for supervision are in place

12. Bullying

Bullying is a form of abuse. It may be seen as particularly hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. In some cases of bullying it may not be an adult bullying a young person. Children and young people may also be responsible for bullying. Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, theft
- Verbal e.g. threats or name-calling
- Emotional e.g. isolating a child from the activities

• Harassment e.g. using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress.

Bullying can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and victims do not often tell. There may be some signs which indicate a child is being bullied:

The child or young person may:

- Hesitate to come to the group or is reluctant to be with particular individuals
- Often be the last one picked for a team or gets picked on
- Have clothing or personal possessions go missing or damaged

• Have bruising or some other injury, become uncharacteristically nervous/ withdrawn or aggressive

Helping the child or young person:

- Take bullying seriously. Ensure the child is safe
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns

• Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.

• Keep records of what is said i.e. what happened, by whom and when.

• Report any concerns to the person in charge at the organisation where the bullying is occurring.

Action towards the bully:

• Try to help the bully to understand the consequences of his/her behaviour and seek an apology from the bully

- Inform the bully's parents/guardians and impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour

13. Anti-slavery and human trafficking

This applies to all persons working for us or on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, directors, officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, agents, contractors and suppliers.

FOVPS strictly prohibits the use of modern slavery and human trafficking in our operations and supply chain. We have and will continue to be committed to implementing systems and controls



aimed at ensuring that modern slavery is not taking place anywhere within our organisation or in any of our supply chains. We expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

Commitments:

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a term used to encompass slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, bonded and child labour and human trafficking. Human trafficking is where a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights.

We shall be an organisation that expects everyone working with us or on our behalf to support and uphold the following measures to safeguard against modern slavery:

• We have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery in our organisation and our supply chains. The prevention, detection and reporting of modern slavery in any part of our organisation or supply chain is the responsibility of all those working for us or on our behalf. Workers must not engage in, facilitate, or fail to report any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy.

• We are committed to engaging with our stakeholders and suppliers to address the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain.

• We take a risk-based approach to our contracting processes and keep them under review. We assess whether the circumstances warrant the inclusion of specific prohibitions against the use of modern slavery and trafficked labour in our contracts with third parties. Using our risked based approach, we will also assess the merits of writing to suppliers requiring them to comply with our Code of Conduct, which sets out the minimum standards required to combat modern slavery and trafficking.

Consistent with our risk-based approach we may require:

• employment and recruitment agencies and other third parties supplying workers to our organisation to confirm their compliance with our Code of Conduct • Suppliers engaging workers through a third party to obtain that third parties' agreement to adhere to the Code

• As part of our ongoing risk assessment and due diligence processes we will consider whether circumstances warrant us carrying out audits of suppliers for their compliance with our Code of Conduct.

• If we find that other individuals or organisations working on our behalf have breached this policy, we will ensure that we take appropriate action. This may range from considering the possibility of breaches being remediated and whether that might represent the best outcome for those individuals impacted by the breach to terminating such relationships

14. Support and Training

We are committed to the provision of child protection training for all our team members.

Safer Recruitment Policy

The safety and wellbeing of our children and adults at risk is our top priority, and we take all reasonable and sensible measures to ensure they are kept safe from harm.

We operate a Safer Recruitment Policy which ensures that all our staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk.



This helps ensure the safety of the children and adults at risk who attend our events or groups and our adult volunteers/staff who provide for their supervision and care.

Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in FOVPS is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk in our care. The Charity is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and adults at risk in its care. As an employer, the Charity expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Safer Recruitment Policy is to help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children and adults at risk or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the Charity's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance such as the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- to ensure that the Charity meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The Charity has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the Charity based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.



The Charity aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at the Charity.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to:

- ensure the Charity has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with all legal requirements.
- monitor the Charity's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of all involved in the recruitment process to:

- ensure that the Charity operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the Charity.
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk at every stage of the procedure.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

The full legal definition of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. HM Government has produced a <u>Factual note on regulated activity in relation to children</u>. Regulated activity includes:

- a) teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children and adults at risk if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children or adults at risk.
- b) work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children or adults at risk, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of their frequency or whether they are supervised or not. This includes:

- c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:
 - personal care includes helping a child or adult at risk, for reasons of age, illness, or disability, with eating or drinking, or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing.
 - health care means care for children or adults at risk provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.



Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the Charity will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more.
- overnight, meaning between 2.00 am, and 6.00 am.
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period and provides the opportunity for contact with children or adults at risk.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the Charity will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the Charity's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Declaration Forms

All applicants will need to complete a declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

It is unlawful for the Charity to employ anyone who is barred from working with children or adults at risk. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children or adults at risk to apply for a position at the Charity. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities, and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children and / or adults at risk.

References



References for shortlisted applicants will be sent for immediately after short listing. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the Charity. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does/did not involve work with children or adults at risk, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children or adults at risk. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee, and their purpose is to provide objective and information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

The Charity does not accept open references, testimonials, or references from relatives.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process if it has been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited for an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Only original documents will be accepted, and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed six months after the recruitment programme.

Offer of appointment and new employee process

The Charity carries out several pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.



If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the **formal interview**, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Charity's standard terms and conditions of employment.
- verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the Charity considers being satisfactory.
- for positions which involve "respite break work":
 - the Charity being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at the Charity
 - alternatively, information which, in the Charity's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the Charity.
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the Charity considers to be satisfactory.
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List*.
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 79 of the Charities Act 2016 which prohibits, disqualifies, or restricts them from providing working at a charity, taking part in the management of an independent charity.
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role.
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK.
- any further checks which are necessary because of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK.
- verification of professional qualifications which the Charity deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

*The Charity is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The Charity is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and Trustees who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the Charity can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must, therefore, be considered by the Charity to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases the Charity will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with or having access to children. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at the Charity.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)



The Charity applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the Charity which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the Charity's policy that the DBS disclosure <u>must be</u> obtained before the commencement of employment of <u>any</u> new employee.

It is the Charity's policy to re-check employee's DBS Certificates every two years and in addition, any employee that takes leave for more than three months (i.e., maternity leave, career break, etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Members of staff at the Charity are aware of their obligation to inform the Trustees of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service if their check was issued after 17 June 2013, for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to the Chair of Trustees within seven days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity.

Dealing with Convictions

The charity operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- the nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence.
- how long ago the offence occurred.
- one-off or history of offences.
- changes in circumstances, decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Chair of Trustees. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Chair of Trustees will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it



not for the disputed information, the Charity may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information

Proof of Identity, Right to work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and or Professional Status

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the Charity will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence, etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in the UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The Charity does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

Medical Fitness

The Charity is required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the Charity, **after** an offer of employment has been made but **before** the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role

The Charity is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas Checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than three months within the previous year will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the Charity.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the Charity's policies and procedures, including the Child Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Conduct, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Register of members of Staff and Volunteers



In addition to the various staff records kept in the Charity and on individual personnel files, a record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Charity's management. The Register will contain details of the following:

- all employees who are employed to work at the Charity.
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the Charity whether employed directly or through an agency.
- all others who have been chosen by the Charity to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, Trustees, people brought into the charity to provide employment contracted services.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The Charity is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the Charity will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the Charity to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the Charity may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the Charity for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the Charity. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the management office, in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with Charity activities.

The Charity will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e., shredded). The six-month retention period is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Ongoing Employment

The Charity recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The Charity will, therefore, provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at FOVPS

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and adults at risk are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. While these are pre- employment checks the Charity also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

 has applied for a position at the Charity despite being barred from working with children or adults at risk.



- has been removed by the Charity from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid).
- has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child or adult at risk.

Contractors and Agency Staff

Contractors engaged by the Charity must complete the same checks for their employees that the Charity is required to complete for its staff. The Charity requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the Charity.

Agencies who supply staff to the Charity must also complete the pre-employment checks which the Charity would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the Charity requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the Charity.

The Charity will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the Charity.

Volunteers

The Charity will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with children or adults at risk at or on behalf of the Charity (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will the Charity permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk.

It is the Charity's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the Charity for one year or more. Volunteers on break are asked to declare any new convictions since their last DBS check within the one-year period. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the Charity on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the Charity to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition, the Charity will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff and other volunteers.
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source.
- an informal safer recruitment interview.
- online background checks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Chair of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated.



Safeguarding

At the Charity, safeguarding is paramount, and we are fully committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children and adults at risk.

We believe that children and adults at risk have a right to be in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any child or adult in distress and are confident about applying the processes to avert and alleviate any such problems.

If any behaviour is a concern in relation to safeguarding the Charity's procedures and processes will always be followed in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Any concerns will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Adults at Risk, Vulnerable adults - Protection Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

A Vulnerable adult can be defined as a person (over 18 years) who is, or may be, in need of community care services or support due to a mental illness/disorder or a physical disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (definition adapted from the Law Commission Report 1995). The welfare of vulnerable adults is a key concern of Friends of Victoria Park, Stretford, and we aim to provide an environment within which Vulnerable adults are safe and secure.

Service Definitions: 'Abuse' can include:

- Physical hitting, smacking, nipping, force feeding, biting
- Psychological verbal abuse, threats to harm, humiliation, intimidation
- Sexual rape, sexual harassment, not consenting to sexual activities
- Financial or material theft, fraud, exploitation, possessions or benefits
- Neglect lack of physical, social and health care
- Discriminatory swearing and name calling which involve racist remarks or about a person's disability, age or gender

Procedures: This policy operates alongside the following:

Friends of Victoria Park, Stretford has adopted a 'No Secrets' Adult Protection procedure. Staff and volunteers who suspect that a vulnerable adult has suffered, or is suffering harm, will refer to and follow these procedures.

Friends of Victoria Park, Stretford operates a Safer Recruitment policy to ensure, as far as possible, that staff and volunteers are suitable people to work with vulnerable adults.

Training: All staff and volunteers receive basic training with regular review in adult protection awareness, so that they are better able to recognise signs of abuse, and are clear about action they must take.



Role of Designated Person: The duties of the Designated Person are:

1. To ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the requirement to report any suspicion of child abuse to the secretary or designated person.

2. To report all cases of suspected abuse towards a vulnerable adult to Social Care and Health or the Police.

The name and contact details of the Designated Person (Shelly Quinton-Hulme) are 20 Moreton Avenue, Stretford, Manchester, M32 8BP, 07718287131.

Responding to Disclosure – Advice for Staff/Volunteers:

1. When a vulnerable adult discloses abuse to any member of staff, the member of staff must inform the vulnerable adult that it may be necessary to share the information with someone else in order that further harm is prevented.

2. Keeping this confidential when a member of staff has been informed of an alleged abusive situation is not an option.

3. You can only promise to act in what you know to be in the best interests of the vulnerable adult, and that you will keep them informed of what is happening.

4. Listen carefully to what the vulnerable adult is saying.

5. Take seriously that the vulnerable adult is saying.

6. Do not ask detailed questions or press the vulnerable adult for more information as this will prejudice any investigation.

7. Do not make judgements or say anything about the alleged abuser.

8. Write down carefully what the vulnerable adult states as soon as possible including date, time, location and sign your record.

9. Any information shared with the Friends of Victoria Park, Stretford is confidential and will not be discussed with anyone not directly involved in the investigation.

10. Keep the vulnerable adult informed of any actions you are preparing to take.

11. Make sure the vulnerable adult is safe and supported whilst under your supervision.

12. Inform the Designated Person of the disclosure at the earliest opportunity. They will make a referral to either Social Care and Health or the Police.

13. In the event of Designated Person being unavailable, staff must report the disclosure to Social Care and Health, or the Police.

Anti-slavery and human trafficking

This applies to all persons working for us or on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, directors, officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, agents, contractors and suppliers.



FOVPS strictly prohibits the use of modern slavery and human trafficking in our operations and supply chain. We have and will continue to be committed to implementing systems and controls aimed at ensuring that modern slavery is not taking place anywhere within our organisation or in any of our supply chains. We expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

Commitments:

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a term used to encompass slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, bonded and child labour and human trafficking. Human trafficking is where a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights.

We shall be an organisation that expects everyone working with us or on our behalf to support and uphold the following measures to safeguard against modern slavery:

• We have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery in our organisation and our supply chains. The prevention, detection and reporting of modern slavery in any part of our organisation or supply chain is the responsibility of all those working for us or on our behalf. Workers must not engage in, facilitate, or fail to report any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy.

• We are committed to engaging with our stakeholders and suppliers to address the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain.

• We take a risk-based approach to our contracting processes and keep them under review. We assess whether the circumstances warrant the inclusion of specific prohibitions against the use of modern slavery and trafficked labour in our contracts with third parties. Using our risked based approach, we will also assess the merits of writing to suppliers requiring them to comply with our Code of Conduct, which sets out the minimum standards required to combat modern slavery and trafficking.

Consistent with our risk-based approach we may require:

• employment and recruitment agencies and other third parties supplying workers to our organisation to confirm their compliance with our Code of Conduct • Suppliers engaging workers through a third party to obtain that third parties' agreement to adhere to the Code

• As part of our ongoing risk assessment and due diligence processes we will consider whether circumstances warrant us carrying out audits of suppliers for their compliance with our Code of Conduct.

• If we find that other individuals or organisations working on our behalf have breached this policy, we will ensure that we take appropriate action. This may range from considering the possibility of breaches being remediated and whether that might represent the best outcome for those individuals impacted by the breach to terminating such relationships.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.