

Safer Recruitment Policy

Veterans Relief and Support

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INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff and volunteers is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in within Veterans Relief and Support. Veterans Relief and Support is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all beneficiaries in its supervision. As an employer, Veterans Relief and Support expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse beneficiaries or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of Veterans Relief and Support's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff and volunteers are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all vacancy applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no vacancy 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 that Veterans Relief and Support meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

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

Veterans Relief and Support 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 Veterans Relief and Support based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers 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 or volunteer 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.

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

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the trustees to:

- Ensure Veterans Relief and Support has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with the requirements of the Safer Recruitment framework..
- Monitor Veterans Relief and Support compliance with it.
- Ensure that Veterans Relief and Support operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at Veterans Relief and Support.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

Trustees will be involved in staff and volunteer appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Chair of the board of trustees.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Veterans Relief and Support 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 Veterans Relief and Support's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA18).

Application Forms

Veterans Relief and Support uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form will not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant's 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. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for Veterans Relief and Support to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at Veterans Relief and Support. 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 Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the 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 in a boarding environment.

References

References for short-listed 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/volunteer roles will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by Veterans Relief and Support. 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, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. 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 factual 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. 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.

Veterans Relief and Support 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 which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to 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 to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE, Veterans Relief and Support carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees and volunteers.

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 Veterans Relief and Support's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which Veterans Relief and Support considers to be satisfactory
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which Veterans Relief and Support considers to be satisfactory;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which Veterans Relief and Support deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified).

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

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 pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Veterans Relief and Support.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check

Veterans Relief and Support 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 Veterans Relief and Support which amount to contact with children. 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 Veterans Relief and Support's policy that the DBS disclosure must be obtained before the commencement of employment/volunteering of any new employee/volunteer.

It is Veterans Relief and Support's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every three years and in addition any employee who takes leave for more than three months (ie maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Members of staff at Veterans Relief and Support are aware of their obligation to inform the Board of 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 for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. Veterans Relief and Support will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the Certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, ie enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should provide a copy of their original Certificate to the Board of Trustees (for employees within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or projects involving contact with children).

Dealing with convictions

Veterans Relief and Support 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 Board 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 the Board 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, Veterans Relief and Support 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 & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

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

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

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Overseas checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months 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 Veterans Relief and Support.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify Veterans Relief and Support policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Record Retention/Data Protection

Veterans Relief and Support is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, Veterans Relief and Support 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 and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help Veterans Relief and Support to discharge its obligations as an employer, eg so that Veterans Relief and Support 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 Veterans Relief and Support for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with Veterans Relief and Support. All information retained on employees will be kept by the board of Trustees in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with Veterans Relief and Support activities.

Veterans Relief and Support will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) [DPA18].

Ongoing Employment

Veterans Relief and Support 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. Veterans Relief and Support will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at Veterans Relief and Support

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people 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. Whilst these are pre-employment checks Veterans Relief and Support also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at Veterans Relief and Support despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by Veterans Relief and Support from working in contact with children (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

Contractors and agency staff

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

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

Veterans Relief and Support 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 Veterans Relief and Support.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires Veterans Relief and Support to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised..

Veterans Relief and Support will obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend Veterans Relief and Support. In doing, the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states:

"'Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations Veterans Relief and Support does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

Volunteers

Veterans Relief and Support will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of Veterans Relief and Support (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will Veterans Relief and Support permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is Veterans Relief and Support'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 Veterans Relief and

Support for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with Veterans Relief and Support on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits Veterans Relief and Support to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition Veterans Relief and Support 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, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout Veterans Relief and Support. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit which will be presented to the Chair of Trustees to report to the governing body.