

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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| Safer Recruitment Policy | |
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The policy has been endorsed by Switch the Play Trustees and will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and up to date.

Purpose of this policy:

The Safer Recruitment Policy identifies and sets out the principles by which Switch the Play commits to protecting all children, young people and vulnerable adults by making sure we employ the right people (on a paid and/or voluntary basis). The policy will confirm what we will do to make sure everyone who works or volunteers with us is suitable to do so and how we will respond to concerns raised about anyone who works or volunteers with us.

To whom the policy applies:

The policy is for all staff who are involved in recruitment, induction and day to day management of staff and volunteers. It is useful for organisations and individuals with whom Switch the Play has partnership relationships. The policy will be made available to all staff, volunteers and any clients as requested.

Safer Recruitment Procedures:

Switch the Play has designed the following procedures to ensure that all staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children, young people and vulnerable adult's safety is considered at every stage of the process.

Planned recruitment process: The recruitment process will be planned in advance to ensure consistency of approach and to ensure enough staff are available to help select the appropriate candidate.

Hiring Managers: In all instances, whether an employee or associate, the 'hiring manager' will make use of our safer recruitment policy to inform the recruitment approach. Informal training and support are provided by our qualified HR professional to sense check and offer guidance on our approach to ensure it reflects safer recruitment practices. We also ensure that we fully debrief our recruitment process as a team to reflect on any lessons learnt and to help ensure that we are following good practice in both inclusion and also our safer recruitment policy. This includes seeking external check and challenge where necessary.

Define the role: Job descriptions and person specifications will highlight the importance of understanding safeguarding issues

Advertising the role: All adverts will have the correct information to attract high quality candidates and deter unsuitable applicants including those who may present a risk.

Self Disclosure: Candidates will be asked to tell us confidentially about any unspent criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary procedures they have on their record. If the role requires an enhanced criminal records check we will ask applicants to disclose an unspent convictions and cautions. This will be carried out under the guidance of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This self disclosure will be carried out in addition to the criminal records check detailed in this policy.

Interview: Shortlisting against criteria set out in person specification will be carried out by at least x2 people. Interviewing will be carried out by at least x2 people and will always involve a face to face meeting. *NB Due to Covid-19, interviews may be required to take place via Zoom in order to adhere to the social distancing rules of the moment in time.*

Questions and performance of tasks will relate to items in the person specification and will allow candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the attitudes and values required to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Each candidate will be asked the same questions and asked to perform the same tasks to ensure equality.

Notes will be taken at each interview.

Candidates identity and certificates will be checked at each interview.

Offer: Once a suitable candidate has been identified, all job offers will be made subject to satisfactory completion of the vetting procedures.

Vetting Procedures:

Switch the Play vetting, disclosure and barring checks will ensure that candidates are suitable for a role.

References: All applicants will be asked to provide details of referees and these references will be obtained as part of the onboarding process. All information provided by referees will be checked for consistency and any discrepancies followed up on.

Criminal records checks: Switch the Play will use the umbrella body, Disclosure Services, to obtain appropriate criminal record checks. All permanent and temporary employees and volunteers will be subject a criminal record check. If the role is 'regulated activity' (as *detailed below*), Switch the Play will obtain the Enhanced with barred list check. Switch the Play will check overseas records as appropriate. Employees will only be able to deliver work in a one to one setting once a criminal record check has been completed.

Right to work checks: Switch the Play will ensure candidates have the right to work in the UK as per Home Office guidelines.

What is "regulated activity"/"regulated work"?

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, regulated activity with children means carrying out any of the below activities frequently or with intensity (more than 3 days in a 30 day period or overnight).

Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; providing advice/guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children.

Working for a limited range of "specified places" with the opportunity for contact with children and young people, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises.

*These are also examples of regulated activity if unsupervised:
engaging in intimate or personal care of children.*

health care (including by a registered health care professional).

In Scotland, regulated work with children can be paid or voluntary. It usually involves:

working directly with children

teaching or supervising children

providing personal services to children

caring responsibilities.

The frequency and intensity requirement does not apply.

Regulated work can also apply to certain positions of trust within organisations, for example being a trustee of a children's charity.

If Vetting checks raise concerns:

If references, vetting, disclosure and barring checks reveal concerns about a person's history, Switch the Play will assess whether or not they are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults based on the following procedures. If necessary, information will be passed onto the relevant authorities.

References: If a reference expresses concerns, is incomplete or vague, the referee will be contacted to address these issues and a written record kept of this conversation. If the issue is significant, further details will be requested from the referee in writing. Unsubstantiated concerns or allegations which have been proven false will not be considered.

Self disclosure form: If a candidate discloses a caution or conviction we will carry out a risk assessment to decide if this is relevant to the post.

Criminal records checks: People on the barred list will not be given a role which requires them to work or volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable adults in a regulated activity. If we find out that someone who has applied to work with children or vulnerable adults is barred we will notify the police. We will not use spent or protected convictions as a reason not to employ somebody unless the conviction makes them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. If an individual has not been barred from working with children but the checks have raised concerns (for example if they have a criminal record) we will carry out a risk assessment to ascertain if the applicant is suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Risk assessment: Decisions about whether or not to employ someone whose vetting checks raised concerns will be made on a case by case basis. We will only share information about an applicants' criminal record with those who need to know. The applicant will be told who in the organisation has been given this information. We will discuss any concerns with the individual directly, acting with sensitivity and empathy. These discussions will take place with x2 individuals, notes will be taken and the evidence will be gathered in order to decide if the applicant is suitable to work or volunteer with children, young people and vulnerable adults. We will consider items such as:

- the nature of the offence and its seriousness
- the relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children and their families
- the length of time since the offence took place
- the length of the sentence
- whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending

- the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- whether these circumstances have changed (if so, do these changes increase or reduce the likelihood of similar offences happening in future?)
- whether the individual has changed since the offence (if so, what has led to the change and does this reduce or increase the likelihood of them committing further offences?)
- the level of remorse expressed by the applicant and/or any efforts to change
- whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend
- any legal constraints relevant to the role, for example if the person has lost their driving licence and the role requires driving.

Induction and Training:

Switch the Play are committed to creating a culture in which safeguarding children and vulnerable adults runs through all we do.

All staff will undertake a consistent induction process which will ensure everyone fully understands and knows how to follow safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff will have a nominated line manager for supervision and all members of staff will be subject to a 3 month probationary period, allowing concerns on either side to be raised and responded to appropriately.

All staff and volunteers will be appropriately trained in safeguarding. This training will be regular and ongoing should there be changes to policies and procedures.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for helping create a safer culture and should feel able to speak out should they have concerns.