



10. Safer Recruitment Policy

10.1 Introduction

Mutual Care are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The adoption of safe recruitment practices and procedures is vital in identifying, deterring and rejecting people unsuitable for working with children. This practice incorporates the recommendations and improvements made by national guidance and legislation.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a sound framework for the recruitment and selection of staff based upon the core principles outlined below, which also meet the requirements of our Equality and Diversity Policy, the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant employment legislation.

A well-planned and structured recruitment procedure is vital in ensuring the best person is recruited for the role, and to determine whether someone is suitable to work with children.

The key to safer recruitment is rigorous scrutiny. All information gathered during the process must be thoroughly checked at every stage. It is important that the need to safeguard children is also considered throughout the recruitment process.

This policy sets out the minimum requirements of the organisation's recruitment process, taking in due consideration of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018) that aims to:

- Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies.
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable children and young people.
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with vulnerable children and young people.

All appointing interview panel members will have undergone training in Safer Recruitment.

10.2 Safe Practice in Recruitment

Safer practice in recruitment means that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount at every stage of the process. It starts with detailed planning of the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants.

All prospective applicants must complete, in full an application for the post they are applying for within the organisation. Mutual Care will not accept Curriculum Vitae's from applicants in support of or in place of an application for any post within the organisation.

Pre-employment Checks

Mutual Care requires certain mandatory pre-employment checks to be completed by the Recruitment Service once a conditional offer has been made to a successful candidate, these are:

- References (minimum of 2 for all roles)
- Medical Declaration (all roles)

- Right to work Check (all roles)
- Enhanced Disclosure Check (all roles)
- International Police Check (where applicable)



References

For safeguarding reasons, the following principals apply:

- Two references from their current employer and most recent employer.
- The current and most recent employer's references must be on official letter headed paper/company stamped paper or sent from an official company email address.
- References from previous line managers' personal e-mail addresses will not be accepted from the current employer reference, they are acceptable from the most recent employer reference.
- For all operational posts the referees must normally cover the previous 5-year career history as a minimum. For non-operational posts the referees must cover the previous two years.
- Where an applicant has previously worked with vulnerable adults or children and young people verification sought as far as reasonably possible as to why employment ceased.
- If the applicant is a school/education leaver references from the education facility/school will be acceptable, in addition character references may also be acceptable - see 5.5.
- References must include full answers on response from the referee wherever possible.
- If any questions remain unanswered these should be probed with referee to establish why they have remained unanswered and a file note retained on the personnel file of the discussion.
- If employment references cannot be obtained, this is likely to prevent appointment. The reason why references cannot be secured should be documented as a file note in the recruitment paperwork. Possible valid reasons are;
- Company policy to provide limited information
- Company has closed down
- Person has limited employment background (e.g. school leaver)
- Character references can only be accepted in certain circumstances. Acceptable character references may be from:
 - Previous line manager who no longer works at last employer
 - Tutor/teacher/religious representative
 - Other professional, e.g. solicitor/ accountant/police/magistrates
 - If previously self-employed, a reference from a recent client
- Employment references should not be from a Hotmail/Google mail or other personal email account unless there has been independent verification of the identity of the referee through telephone discussion or face to face meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the Registered Manager or Responsible Individual to check and approve references. This cannot be delegated to anyone else.

International Check

Where successful applicants for employment has lived outside the UK as an adult (i.e. from age 18 onwards) for a continuous period of more than 6 months in the last 5 years, Mutual Care will require an international police check (which may be called a certificate of good conduct) to be completed as part of the pre-employment/selection process.

Medical Declaration

Successful candidates will be asked to complete a medical declaration as part of the pre-employment check process. Where a candidate states they have a medical condition that

may impact their ability to undertake the responsibilities of the position, it may be necessary to carry out more detailed medical checks to assess the candidate's suitability for the role.

Disclosure Check

Enhanced Disclosure checks will be undertaken for all candidates appointed to eligible roles



Right to Work Check

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires Managers to ensure that all new employees are eligible to work in the UK by seeing, checking and verifying an original copy of relevant Right to Work documentation. Failure to do this prior to employing an individual is a criminal offence and can lead to Mutual Care receiving a civil penalty.

Equality Statement

Mutual Care is committed to embedding safer recruitment practices throughout the recruitment process from identification of a vacancy to commencement in post.

The primary aim of this document is to outline the organisations procedure for Recruitment and Selection and pre-employment checks.

10.4 Scrutinising and Shortlisting Applications

Mutual Care Ltd will ensure that at least two people must be involved in the process of scrutinising applications and short-listing candidates. It is recommended that at least one member of those people will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

An objective approach should always be taken, and subjective judgments avoided. Two people will also mean that it is much less likely that any key information or gaps in employment will be missed if both individuals separately scrutinise the applications.

All applications should be checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant. As well as obtaining reasons for gaps in employment, the reasons for any repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work should also be explored and verified.

All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

10.5 Invitation to Interview

Within the invitation to the candidate, Mutual Care will clearly explain how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children.

The invitation will also stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that where a DBS Disclosure is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS Disclosure.

Candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity to satisfy DBS requirements, i.e. either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, plus documents such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation.

Candidates will also be asked to bring documents confirming their qualifications as stated in their application.

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10.6 Scope of the Interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, Mutual Care's interview panel will explore the following:

- The candidate's attitude towards children
- The motivation and reason for working with children
- The attitudes and behaviours about control and sanctions
- Their perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children
- Their ability to maintain professional relationships
- The understanding of safeguarding children
- Gaps in the candidate's employment history

The panel will also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure

10.7 Conditional Offer of Appointment

Any offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon the following:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Proof of the candidate's identity
- Proof of the candidate's right to work in the UK
- Enhanced DBS Disclosure Check
- Verification of qualifications
- Completion of any probationary period where applicable

10.8 Post Appointment Induction

There will be an organisational induction programme for all newly appointed staff and volunteers regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide training and information about Mutual Care's policies and procedures.
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role
- Confirm the conduct expected for the staff within the organisation
- Provide opportunities for new members of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities
- Enable the person's line manager to mentor the staff member and recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability and suitability for the role.

The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme will include information about:

- Any written statements of policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention, child protection and whistle blowing.
- Safer practices and standards of conduct.
- Relevant procedures regarding disciplinary, managing performance and whistle blowing



- Provide opportunities to discuss any concerns or issues about their role and responsibilities.

The induction programme will also include completion of enhanced child protection training as appropriate to the person's role.

10.9 Summary

The Responsible Individual will:

- Ensure that Mutual Care statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials.
- Ensure that Mutual Care's application form complies with recommended safer recruitment practice
- Ensure that all job descriptions and person specifications for the role(s) we are recruiting to are up to date.
- Ensure that an appropriate advertisement prepared that contains all necessary information about the role, timetable and commitment to safeguarding.
- Ensure that there is a suitable candidate information pack containing information about the organisation, role and safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensure that each application received is scrutinised in a systematic way by a panel before shortlisting and sending invites to interview
- Ask shortlisted candidates to bring all necessary documents to prior to the interview
- Ensure that a face to face interview is conducted for ALL shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job description
- Ensure that questions focus on suitability to work or volunteer with children. And will scrutinise for gaps in employment and establish reasons
- Ensure that a confident selection of a preferred candidate is based on their demonstration of suitability for the role
- Ensure that the preferred candidate is informed that the offer of employment or voluntary work is conditional on receiving satisfactory information from all necessary checks