**Introduction**

All organisations, which employ staff or volunteers to work with children, should adopt a consistent and thorough process of safe recruitment in order to ensure that those recruited are suitable and The Howard House Organisation should be no exception.

Northumberland Safeguarding Board will help and support us to implement safe recruitment and selection practices by providing access to relevant government guidance, examples of good practice guidance, and model policies and procedures where needed.

Safe recruitment practice should include those persons who may not have direct contact with children, but because of their presence and familiarity in certain settings will still be seen as safe and trustworthy. The principles of safe recruitment should be included in the terms of any contract drawn up between the Howard House Organisation and contractors or agencies that provide services for children for whom we are responsible.

**Training**

All organisations involved in the selection of adults to work with children should ensure that designated staff undertake safe recruitment training as approved by NCSL (for Head Teachers and governors) or the LCSB (other professionals) and other training specific to their organisation where available.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board should monitor the take up of such training through the NSCB Workforce Task Group.

**Safer Recruitment Practice**

Safer recruitment practice should be applied at all stages of the recruitment process:

* Advertising and information for applicants
* References
* Other checks before interview
* Selection of candidates
* Interviewing short-listed candidates
* Offer of appointment to successful candidate
* Induction and supervision of newly appointed staff

**Advertisements and Information for Applicants**

We should demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding and protecting children by ensuring that all recruitment advertising material contains the following policy statement to this effect:

 **‘The Howard House Organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment’**

All information given to the interested applicant should highlight the importance placed by us on rigorous selection processes. The information should stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly. A Disclosure Barring Service check will always be required.

The job description will clearly set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children with whom the person will have contact. The person specification will explain:

* The qualifications and experience needed for the role.
* The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate.
* How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

The application form will ask for:

* Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past
* A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including any periods of further education or training. This should include start and end dates explanations for leaving and gaps in employment, education or training.
* Details of any relevant academic and/or vocational qualifications
* A declaration that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including those regarded as spent. This should also include referral to or inclusion on any government list or regulatory body restricting or preventing them from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Curriculum vitae, drawn up by applicants in place of an application form are not acceptable because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.

**References**

The application form should request both professional (two) and character references, one of which should be from the applicant’s current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer should be asked for in addition to that from the current or most recent employer if this is different.

References should be sent wherever possible to business addresses, not a home address. Any issues of concern raised by a reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during a second interview References should contain objective, verifiable information and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate’s suitability to work with children should be provided.

References should include:

* length of time the person has known the applicant and in what capacity;
* post held with dates, salary and reasons for leaving;
* ability and suitability to work with children and young people;
* skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these have been demonstrated;
* any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanction;
* any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children and young people and the outcome of these (including where any sanction has expired);
* details of any criminal convictions, cautions or bindovers;
* sickness record;
* if the referee would re-employ the applicant and, if not details of why verification of the identity of the referee.

The referee should be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against him/her or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children and young people or about the applicant’s behaviour towards children or young people. Details about the outcome of any concerns or allegations should be sought.

Open references or testimonials should not be accepted

**Other Checks**

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children, which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored

**Selection of Candidates**

There are standard procedures for short listing to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Safe recruitment means that all applications should additionally be:

* Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the candidate for completion.
* Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
* Considered with regard to any history of gaps, or repeated changes, in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons.

All candidates should be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, either a full birth certificate, passport or photo card driving licence and additionally a document such as a utility bill or bank statement that verifies the candidate’s name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Candidates should also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

**Interviewing Short-listed Candidates**

Questions should be set which test the candidate’s specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for.

The candidate’s attitude toward children and young people in general should be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. At least one member of the interview panel should be trained in how best this can be done.

Any gaps and changes in employment history should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee.

All candidates should bring to interview documentary evidence as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act and in line with DBS requirements.

* [www.ukimmigration.com./employer/ukworkpermit14.htm](http://www.ukimmigration.com./employer/ukworkpermit14.htm)
* [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)/dbs

Where relevant, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

**Offer of Appointment to Successful Candidate**

An offer of appointment should be conditional upon pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed, including:

* An Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check appropriate to the role.
* Verification of the candidate’s medical fitness.
* Verification of any relevant professional status and whether any restrictions have been imposed by a regulatory body such as the General Teaching Council (GTC) and the Health & Care Professionals Council (HCPC).

All checks should be confirmed in writing and retained on the candidate’s personnel file, together with photocopies of documents used to verify his/her identity and qualifications.

Under DBS regulations, DBS disclosure can usually only be kept for 6 months, but a record should be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained and who by, the level of the disclosure and the unique reference number.

A record should be kept of evidence to show that such checks have been carried out in respect of supply staff and volunteers whether recruited directly or through an agency.

Satisfactory references must be kept on the candidate’s personnel file or, in the case of supply staff not recruited through our organisation, on a separate record within our organisation.

Where information gained by the Howard House Organisation from either references or other checks calls into question the candidate’s suitability to work with children, or where the candidate has provided false information in support of the application the facts should be reported to the Police and DBS.

**Induction and Supervision of Newly Appointed Staff**

The induction of all newly appointed staff should include an introduction to the organisation’s child protection policies and procedures. This should include being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of those staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

New staff members should be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected.

They should also be made aware of the organisation’s personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the relevant whistle blowing policy.

The programme of induction should also include child protection training at a level appropriate to the member of staff’s work with children. Senior managers should ensure that their staff are adequately and appropriately supervised and that they have ready access to advice, expertise and management support in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection.

**Sickness:**

While we should be able to plan for holidays, courses etc. we can not plan for sickness. However, we must ensure that if staff are going to be on the sick you must inform the school as quickly as possible and managers should be informed asap keeping the school informed as to when we may be returning to work.

Staff must inform the home ASAP where their continued sickness includes extended periods with frequent new ‘Doctors Sick Notes’

**Time keeping:**

It is important that everyone is prompt at the start of shifts. If people can not get to work on time they should contact the school before the school meetings starts to warn people. If you are late there may be an expectation that you make up the hours at another time.

**Recording hours:**

All hours worked must be recorded on the appropriate time sheets and accounted for at the end of each four-week period.