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Recruitment and Vetting Policy

Policy Note

For the purposes of this policy, Orchard Therapeutic Farm (OTF), Orchard Therapeutic Outreach (OTO), Orchard Therapeutic Barn (OTB) and Orchard Therapeutic Active (OTA) will together be referred to as “the Services”

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, and contractors of the Services, as well as anyone representing Orchard Therapeutic Farm, Orchard Therapeutic Outreach, Orchard Therapeutic Barn and Orchard Therapeutic Active in an official capacity.

Policy Statement

The Services will recruit only those individuals for employment who can show the requisite level of education, qualifications, experience and aptitude, appropriate to the work they are required to undertake, and will not discriminate, unlawfully, in the provision of employment opportunities.

The recruitment process inevitably involves the collection of personal information (and sensitive data) which is subject to the standards imposed under Data Protection legislation and Codes of Practice. The Services commit to protecting and keep secure all personal data, to process it in accordance with the Regulations, and to allow subject access when requested.

This recruitment and vetting procedure must be followed at all times, and applies to everyone employed, without exception. Conduct which is contrary to the spirit, intentions and purpose of this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.

This policy will help you to understand how we select staff in ways that uphold the quality of the services we deliver. It will describe the processes undertaken to maintain high standards and safety through recruitment.

The Services aim to be the provider of choice within our catchment area and believes we will accomplish this aim by meeting the expectations of our children, the families and all other associated stakeholders. At the heart of meeting these expectations is establishing a competent, skilled and dedicated workforce.

Staff are the lifeblood of our organisation; attracting the right employees is important for maintaining high standards of service, delivery, performance and customer satisfaction. We will review and evaluate staffing thresholds and approaches to safer recruitment, where necessary, on a continuous basis.

Young Person's Voice	How this applies to Recruitment and Vetting Policy
I feel safe because the people working with me have been carefully chosen.	Safer recruitment ensures that only individuals who have been thoroughly checked, vetted, and risk assessed are allowed to work with children and young people
I know that adults here can be trusted.	References, DBS checks and verification of qualifications mean staff are suitable, reliable and able to safeguard children and young people.
I am supported by staff who understand me and know how to help.	Recruitment focuses on selecting staff with the right skills, training and values to meet the needs of children/young people.
I feel included and respected for who I am.	Equality and diversity principles are embedded in recruitment so that no one is discriminated against. Staff represent inclusive practice.

I can rely on adults to put my wellbeing first.	Risk assessments, supervision and monitoring of staff ensure that safeguarding remains the top priority at every stage of employment.
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This Policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Referrals Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy (GDPR compliance)
- Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Induction and Training Policy

Why Effective Recruitment Matters

It is essential that The Services recruit and select individuals with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications for the organisation to function successfully. It is imperative that we employ members of staff who can:

- Deliver our company's strategic objectives
- Promote our ethos and values
- Demonstrate requisite personal qualities
- Understand our approach and commitment to high quality support
- Make positive contributions to the aims of the organisation

Relevant Legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 1986
- The Police Act 1997
- Employment Act 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSiE)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023 update)
- Education Act 2002

Recruitment Pack

We will make available a Recruitment Pack for all applicants. This will include:

- Details of the Services.
- The relevant job description and person specification, (with signed declarations to be provided)
- An application form (a curriculum vitae is not acceptable by itself but may be sent in addition to the application form).
- The Services' Aims and Ethos.
- A copy of the Services' Safeguarding Policy or where to find the document.
- Safeguarding Statement
- Data Protection Statement

The Recruitment Process

At the Services we follow a seven-step safer recruitment process, as detailed below. All prospective candidates will undertake the same process, ensuring fair and equitable experience for every applicant.

- 1 Advertisements
- 2 Application Form
- 3 Interview
- 4 Selection
- 5 Statutory Checks
- 6 Offer of Employment
- 7 Probation & Monitoring

The Centre manager will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed and implemented during the recruitment process.

Step 1 – Advertisements

Vacancies will generally be advertised on an appropriate online platform. Vacancies can also be advertised by word of mouth via existing personnel.

→ Local Recruitment

Where we hold contracts with and deliver services on behalf of local Authorities, we will endeavour to recruit the required workforce from within the local authority's boundaries.

All vacancies will be posted on the company's electronic and internal noticeboards. The Services encourages internal promotions wherever possible as development opportunities for its staff. Vacancies can be advertised by word of mouth via existing personnel.

The Services provide its existing staff with an opportunity to indicate their interest in vacancies as they arise, allowing staff to advance within the company according to their skills and experience. In general, notices of all job vacancies are posted internally for a period of four weeks as well as being advertised externally where necessary. To be eligible to apply for a vacancy, an existing staff member must be performing competently in their present position. The Services encourage staff members to talk with their line manager about their career plans. Managers are

encouraged to support staff members' efforts to gain experience and advance within the organisation.

The Services may, on occasion, decide to restrict advertising to internal candidates only. Furthermore, lead posts will always be advertised internally in the first instance, to provide continuous development of existing members of staff, unless management agrees that this is not appropriate due to the specialist skills required for the post involved.

Where vacancies are restricted to internal candidates only this will be clearly indicated in the advertisement. All internal candidates will be selected for interviews on the same criteria as external candidates.

Employees on maternity leave will receive all advertisements for posts advertised in the company during their period of maternity leave.

In all recruitment activities, we comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 and our own Equality and Diversity Policy. This will apply when posting job adverts, compiling job descriptions, person specifications and throughout the safer recruitment process.

→ **Job Posting**

Additional to the internal posting of any vacancies, jobs can be advertised in local media, job centres and in online media (including social media), at recruitment fairs and via recruitment agencies. This is to ensure that as a company, we can reach a wider pool of prospective employees as much as possible for any required role. The advert must be aimed to attract the 'best fit' candidate and should be based on a clear specific job description and detailed person specifications.

A good advert should project a positive but realistic image and reflect commitment to safeguarding young services people, for example; "The Service is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. All staff are expected to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures, act promptly on any concerns, communicate effectively and share information appropriately."

All adverts must stress that candidates successful at the interview will be subjected to Disclosure and Barring Service, identity and reference checks. All of our adverts state:

'At Hitchcox Group, we take our safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously and are fully committed to promoting the welfare and safety of all children and



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young persons in our care. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff play an essential role in ensuring that our environments are safe, supportive and inclusive.

As part of our safer recruitment practices, we will conduct appropriate pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of all prospective employees. This includes conducting online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of our due diligence process, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025* guidance.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975). Further information about the DBS process can be found at www.disclosures.co.uk.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring a culture of vigilance where the welfare of children and young people is paramount.
- Providing a safe and caring environment that enables every child to learn and thrive.
- Promoting equality, inclusion, and respect for all.
- Ensuring all staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection training in line with current statutory guidance.'

→ **Job Description**

The job description will include the main requirements of the individual in the specific post, the definition of interfacing roles and responsibilities, as well as the required relationship with people who use the services and other stakeholders.

→ **Person Specification**

The person specification should clearly define the qualifications, skills, experience and general attitudes needed by the candidate to successfully undertake the post. The requirements listed in the person specification must be objective, justified and measurable. It is best practice to focus on essential criteria rather than desirable criteria, as it can lead to less objective decision-making.

Desirable requirements may be used to distinguish between candidates who meet the essential requirements equally well. Skills, knowledge and experience relate to

the practical ability of the candidate to perform the main tasks highlighted in the job description and are equally important in the selection of the ideal candidate.

Step 2 - Application Form

The application form will ask for the applicant's date of birth, any previous names used, as well as details of relevant academic and vocational qualifications.

It will ask for full employment history, paid and unpaid including an explanation of any gaps in employment at any point in their employment history.

It will ask candidates to explain how their experience to date will enable them to meet the requirements of the post they have applied for.

It will ask for relevant qualifications and completed training specific to the role. For example, teaching qualifications for a teaching role

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, applicants will be asked to disclose any convictions, cautions or bind overs, whether they are spent or not.

Where applicable, details must be provided in a sealed envelope.

The application form must be checked to ensure that they are fully completed. It should be checked for errors and discrepancies. Incomplete application forms should be returned to applicants for proper completion.

In applying for posts, all candidates will be provided with a job description, details of the appropriate conditions of service and details about the company. A brief statement about the appointment procedure will also be provided and, if possible, an indication of the date (or week) when interviews will be held. The job description will include:

- A list of the main duties and responsibilities of the post
- An outline of the requisite qualifications
- Details of any experience that candidates are expected to possess

Protected Characteristics and Equality & Diversity

In drawing up the job description and conditions of service the company will ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, religion/beliefs, age, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities or hours of work. No applicant is placed at a disadvantage unjustifiably by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group

→ **Do I have to declare if I have a physical or mental disability?**

Applicants will be asked to specify whether they have any disabilities, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, i.e.:

“If they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Day-to-day activities include things such as using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.”

Applicants are encouraged to make us aware of any reasonable adjustments needed for them to attend an interview. All applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job will be interviewed and considered on their merits.

→ **References**

In compliance with the foregoing provisions of this policy in addition to Keeping Children Safe in Education Sep 25; All posts are subject to receipt of two satisfactory professional and one character reference. One reference must be the applicant’s current or most recent employer.

Documentary evidence of relevant qualifications, full employment history and satisfactory information about their ability to work within a regulated activity is also strictly required.

All successful candidates must prove their “Right to Work” status through checks from the Home Office Department.

Formal employment offers must not be issued prior to the receipt of satisfactory written references and the provision of the following original documentation:

- A DBS Enhanced Level Clearance
- Immigration Documentation proving a “Right to Work”
- Verification of reasons for leaving previous employment
- A written explanation of any spent or unspent convictions
- Verified identity documents.

Please note that all information supplied by the referees must remain confidential within the boundaries of the law.

→ **Recording and Collection of Data**

Applicants' details will be recorded at the point of receipt. All information relating to the data collected in the equality and diversity recruitment monitoring form will be hidden from all those involved in the safer recruitment process. The information collected will be solely used for the purposes of equality monitoring.

All completed application forms are private and confidential and should only be made available to those directly involved in the safer recruitment process.

→ **Shortlisting (Pre-Interview)**

All application forms will be collected by the human resources administrator and supplied to the appointing manager and interview panel for shortlisting purposes.

A shortlist of candidates will be drawn up for an interview, based entirely on merit and suitability for the post but taking account of the company's responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010. Other than in exceptional circumstances, reasonable notice will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time to prepare for and make the necessary arrangements to attend the interview.

Steps 3 & 4 – Interview and Selection

The shortlisting is based upon the key identified criteria from the person specification supplied. Shortlisting must be undertaken by a minimum of two representatives of the proposed interview panel, to ensure consistency and collective agreement. At least one of the interviewers must have completed training in safer recruitment

The Services use value-based recruitment techniques in the interview process. Value-based interviewing is a structured means of exploring examples of applicants' work Behaviour, rooted in organisational values and Behaviour. It focuses on how and why the applicant has made certain choices in their work and explores the attitudes and reasons underpinning their Behaviour. By incorporating this information alongside an applicant's experience, skills and competencies, The Services can gain a wider and more comprehensive view of the applicant, to recruit high performing, effective staff that are more closely aligned with organisational

values, such as their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people.

The Interview

All interviews will include safeguarding and child protection questions.

- A face-to-face panel interview will be conducted to assess the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people, as well as their overall suitability for the role being recruited.
- The interview panel will consist of a minimum of two members, including at least one individual who has completed safer recruitment training and one individual authorised to make the appointment decision.
- Consensus on the required standards for the post will be reached collectively, with all relevant issues considered in line with the agreed assessment criteria.
- The panel will evaluate the candidate's attitude towards children and young people, together with their ability to uphold safeguarding policies and the organisational aims of The Services.
- Questions concerning child protection and safeguarding will be included in all interviews for staff and volunteers prior to any offer of employment.
- Health-related questions will not be asked during the interview. Successful candidates will subsequently be required to complete a medical health questionnaire prior to the commencement of employment.

Notifying Applicants of Outcomes: All interviewed candidates will be notified of the outcome of the selection process as soon as possible, either by telephone, email or letter. Feedback will be provided

Steps 5 & 6 - Relevant Checks and Offer of Employment

All offers of employment will be made conditional to satisfactory results from the following statutory checks, these checks are in place to ensure safer recruitment, in order to fully protect the company and our young people

→ **Right-to-work in the UK**

- In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* and current Home Office legislation, Orchard Therapeutic Farm will only employ individuals who have a confirmed Right to Work (RtW) in the UK.
- All applicants must provide original, valid documentation demonstrating their RtW, in accordance with the Home Office *Right to Work Checks: Employer Guidance*.
- For individuals with a digital immigration status (eVisa), an online share code must be provided so the our recruitment team can complete the mandatory Home Office online check.
- EEA and Swiss citizens do not automatically have RtW. They must provide evidence of immigration status (e.g., *EU Settlement Scheme status* or a valid visa).
- British and Irish nationals may present an original passport, or where no passport is available, alternative acceptable documents as listed in the Home Office guidance.
- Where permitted, the services may use a government-certified Identity Service Provider (IDSP) to complete digital identity verification for British/Irish passport holders.
- All checks will be completed before employment commences, and a dated copy of all documents or online check results will be securely stored on the personnel file.
- Any applicant requiring immigration permission must have approval from the centre manager before any job offer is made.
- The services will not employ any individual who does not have a verified Right to Work.

Registration and qualifications

Registration, Qualifications and Professional Status Checks

In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* and safer recruitment expectations, the school will ensure that all staff employed in regulated activity have the appropriate qualifications, registrations and professional status required for their role.

Verification of Qualifications

All candidates must provide original qualification certificates relevant to their role.

The service will take dated copies for the personnel file.

Where appropriate, the service will make direct contact with the awarding body (by email or telephone) to verify the legitimacy of any qualification where there is doubt, inconsistency, or where the certificate appears altered.

Verification of qualifications does **not** confirm professional registration; separate checks are required (see below).

Professional Registration (where applicable)

For roles requiring professional registration (e.g., teachers, social workers, nurses, counsellors, psychologists), the school will:

- Obtain registration details and documentation from the candidate.
- Conduct an online registration check directly with the relevant professional body (e.g., the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), HCPC, NMC).

Confirm that registration is:

- Current
- Unrestricted

Free from sanctions, prohibitions, or fitness-to-practise concerns

For teachers, the school will carry out:

A mandatory TRA Teacher Employer Access (Teacher Services) check for:

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- Induction status
- Prohibition orders and sanctions
- Section 128 directions

For medical or therapeutic professionals, the school will check relevant specialist registers where appropriate.

Frequency of Professional Registration Checks

Professional registration must be confirmed:

- At initial recruitment
- When an individual changes role or duties requiring updated registration
- At least annually, or more frequently where required by a professional body or internal policy

Alert Notices

The service will check any relevant alert mechanisms issued by professional registration bodies or statutory agencies to identify:

- Restrictions to practise
- Interim suspension orders
- Fitness-to-practise investigations

Minimum of Two Satisfactory References

The centre will obtain a minimum of **two references**, including:

The most recent employer, and

Any employer where the candidate worked with children or vulnerable groups

References must be **verified**, checked for inconsistencies, and followed up where necessary.

Self-Declaration: Criminal History & Safeguarding Concerns

All shortlisted candidates are required to complete a **confidential self-declaration** regarding:

- Criminal history
- Prohibitions or restrictions
- Being known to children's social care
- Safeguarding allegations or concerns

This is reviewed prior to interview in line with KCSIE.

Medical Fitness to Work

All successful candidates must complete a medical fitness self-declaration to confirm they are able to perform the role.

Where concerns arise, the school may seek advice from Occupational Health.

Offer of employment

Following the interviews, a provisional offer subject to pre-employment checks will be issued to the successful candidate advising them of the outcome.

Checks will include;

- Identity verification (Photo ID and Address documents)
- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check
- Prohibition from teaching check (via Teaching Regulatory Agency)
- Section 128 check for management roles

- Overseas police checks for applicants who have lived or worked abroad for 3+ months **in the last 10 years**
- Verification of professional qualifications
- receipt of two satisfactory references (these will be verified by phone with the relevant employers),
- verification of relevant qualifications and
- right to work in the UK for non-European Economic Area nationals.
- It must be made clear to staff without the completion of an Enhanced DBS clearance that they would receive additional supervision until this is completed. The Services will ask for an Enhanced DBS check due to the nature of the service; staff will have frequent contact with young people at, regardless of whether they are engaging with young people directly **as workers**, or less frequently, such as administration staff.

Acceptance of offer

Following the acceptance of an offer of employment, a personnel file will be created for the new staff member and must adhere to

Keeping children safe in education Spe 25 by including:

- proof of identity (including a recent photograph)
- the relevant Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate
- Two references, including reasons for leaving previous employment (should the staff member have worked with vulnerable children.
- Qualification documentation
- A full employment history

Single Central Record (SCR)

As part of In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*, the Services maintain a fully compliant Single Central Record (SCR) detailing all statutory pre-employment checks required for individuals working or volunteering within regulated activity. This includes all staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors and any other adults engaged in providing services to children and young people across the Services.

A nominated member of staff acts as the custodian of the SCR. The DSL and Centre Manager undertake formal termly checks to verify that all information is accurate, complete and aligned with the requirements set out by the DfE, the Local Authority and Ofsted. These checks include, but are not limited to:

- Identity verification
- Enhanced DBS and Barred List checks
- Overseas police checks where required
- Verification of qualifications and professional registration
- Section 128 and Prohibition from Teaching checks
- Right to Work verification
- Reference verification
- Confirmation of employment history and reasons for leaving previous posts

The SCR is updated immediately upon recruitment of new staff or changes to existing staff records. A safer recruitment checklist is completed for every appointment, ensuring that all statutory checks are completed and recorded before commencement of duties.

The SCR is scrutinised as part of the Services' **Termly Quality Assurance cycle**, and compliance is reviewed at safeguarding and governance meetings. Any gaps identified are recorded in the SCR action log, addressed immediately and monitored until resolved.

The SCR forms a core element of the Services' safer recruitment and safeguarding framework. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or organisational requirements change.

Satisfactory information about any physical or mental health conditions

Key Question: How does DBS check work?

All candidates must complete a self-declaration regarding any criminal history or safeguarding concerns as part of the application process. An enhanced DBS check, including a barred list check where the role requires one, will be carried out prior to employment. DBS checks are not repeated annually unless the individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service or there is a change of role or a safeguarding concern that requires a new check. Where information is disclosed on a DBS certificate, the case will be reviewed by a Services Recruiting Manager and the decision supported by at least two senior managers of the Services. A suitability risk assessment will be completed, and clients will only be informed that all statutory checks and assessments have been undertaken; conviction details will not be shared.

All DBS information is handled in strict confidence and stored securely. Only the date of the check, certificate number, type of check and outcome are retained, in line with the DBS Code of Practice. DBS certificates themselves are not kept on file and are destroyed within six months unless there is an exceptional reason to retain them for longer, in which case the Services will consider data protection legislation and the rights of the individual before doing so.

Where an applicant has lived or worked overseas for a period of **12 months or more within the last 10 years**, an overseas police check will be obtained and verified in addition to the enhanced DBS check. Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to receive it as part of their duties, and passing this information to anyone not entitled to see it is a criminal offence. The Services will not retain criminal record information for longer than necessary and will comply with all relevant legislation, including UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

Criminal record checks (disclosure and barring service check)

Where a DBS certificate contains information (a “positive disclosure”), the prospective employee must not commence work and must be withdrawn from the recruitment process pending the completion of a formal risk assessment by a senior manager. A positive disclosure refers to any DBS certificate containing convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands, police intelligence or other relevant “soft information” released by police forces under Schedule 8 of the Police Act 1997.

Upon receipt of a positive disclosure, the **Lead Recruitment staff** will notify the relevant Line Manager within two working days. The Line Manager will then provide the appropriate risk assessment tool to the **Lead Recruitment staff** to complete with the applicant, unless the disclosure indicates immediate and serious concerns.

Where the information disclosed raises a concern that a child or young person could be at risk of significant harm if the individual were to have contact with them, the Services must not employ the person until a discussion has taken place with the Oxfordshire Local Authority Safeguarding Team. If the individual is already employed or volunteering, the Services will consider suspension pending completion of the risk assessment.

A formal risk assessment must be undertaken in all cases. As part of this process, an interview with the applicant must take place within five working days to explore the circumstances of the disclosure. This meeting is essential to verify that the disclosure information relates to the correct individual and to allow the applicant to provide context or clarification. Verification must occur before any decision is made, as DBS errors, though rare, can occur.

Following the risk assessment and interview, the completed assessment must be returned to the Line Manager for review and sign-off by senior management. Any DBS information that may raise child protection concerns must also be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before a decision is finalised. The LADO may recommend that a strategy meeting is convened in accordance with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The Services will follow all advice and directions provided.

Positive DBS disclosures may also contain relevant third-party information. In such cases, the applicant may not have personal convictions but may be in a relationship or household situation that poses a safeguarding concern. This information is disclosed because the police consider it relevant to the role and to the safety of children. The Services will therefore assess whether the applicant may pose a risk to young people due to their relationship with the third party, their insight into the concerns, the potential for grooming or increased vulnerability, and whether any

risks can be safely managed. The paramount consideration at all times is the safeguarding and welfare of children.

The Services may consult the LADO for advice and guidance on the assessment of third-party information and determining whether employment is safe and appropriate. Safeguarding remains the overriding priority.

For further guidance on DBS processes and decision-making, please refer to the Services' Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Referrals Policy.

Additional Guidance in making a decision to confirm employment

The Services recognise that it is not possible to provide a fixed “tariff” of offences, as each case must be considered on its own merits, taking into account the nature of the disclosure, the role applied for, the individual’s history and conduct, and all other pre-employment checks. It is possible to employ an individual with previous convictions, provided that a clear, robust and defensible risk assessment has been completed and evidenced, and that the decision aligns with statutory safeguarding guidance. Before any decision is finalised, all pre-employment checks must be satisfactory, including verified references obtained directly from previous employers.

The following anonymised scenarios illustrate how decisions may be reached:

<p>Example 1 Shoplifting conviction 11 years before application. Conviction declared. No further offences since.</p>	<p>Decision: Accept</p>
<p>Example 2 Two convictions for drug offences 5 years before the application. Not declared.</p>	<p>Decision: Reject</p>

<p>Example 3 Caution for possession of controlled drug 4 years before application. Caution declared. No further offences. Supportive references.</p>	<p>Decision: Reject</p>
<p>Example 4 Cautioned for theft 5 years before application. Not declared. A juvenile offence that the applicant believed would not remain on record. No offences since.</p>	<p>Decision: Accept</p>
<p>Example 5 6 convictions for various offences over a 17-year period. Not all declared.</p>	<p>Decision: Reject (due to nature of offences and substantial under-declaration).</p>
<p>Example 6 12 offences, including theft, an offence against property and public disorder offences over a 19-year period. Not declared.</p>	<p>Decision: Reject</p>

Statutory guidance is clear that offences involving sexual harm, violence, exploitation, drug supply, or serious dishonesty raise significant concerns for roles involving the care of children and young people. Offences involving driving or alcohol misuse are particularly relevant where the role includes the transportation of young people. Although older offences may carry less relevance than recent behaviour, serious violent or sexual offences, or serious substance-related offences, will almost always raise substantial concerns. The potential for rehabilitation must always be weighed against the overriding duty to safeguard children and young people.

Once an employment decision has been agreed by all relevant managers, the Line Manager will receive the completed risk assessment and must store it securely on the individual's personnel file. The Single Central Record will note that a positive

DBS disclosure was considered, with an asterisk indicating that further information is held in the personnel file. The risk assessment must be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

If an individual is found to be on the DBS children's barred list or adults' barred list, they must not be employed in any regulated activity. Due to the nature of the work carried out by the Services, such individuals cannot be employed in any capacity.

Implications of the Equality Act 2010

Implications of the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 requires all employers to ensure that recruitment, selection and appointment processes are fair, transparent and free from unlawful discrimination. The Services are committed to promoting equal opportunities and ensuring that no candidate is disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic.

Disability Issues

It is unlawful for an employer to refuse to shortlist a disabled applicant purely because they have a disability or a particular type of disability. Questions about the nature or cause of an individual's disability must not be raised during the interview process. However, employers may ask whether an applicant requires any reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate fully in the recruitment process.

Examples of reasonable adjustments during recruitment include:

- arranging an accessible interview room for a wheelchair user
- ensuring minimal background noise for a candidate with a hearing impairment
- allowing a candidate with a learning disability to attend with a support person
- providing large-print documents or visual support for a candidate with a visual impairment

The Services will always consider reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access to the recruitment process.

Discrimination Issues

Employers are permitted to request information related to date of birth, marital status, dependants, nationality, disability, religion or belief, and other

protected characteristics only for the purposes of equality monitoring and to comply with statutory requirements. This information must be collected on a separate monitoring form and must not be used to influence shortlisting or selection decisions.

The application form used in the recruitment process must only request information relevant to the role. Any information relating to health or disability may be requested at the application stage solely to support necessary adjustments during the recruitment process – it must not be used to assess suitability for the job itself.

Questions relating to workplace adjustments or fitness to carry out the role must not be asked until a conditional offer of employment has been made. Decisions must focus on the applicant's skills, experience and abilities. However, if a disabled candidate cannot perform essential functions of the role even after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the Services may lawfully decline to appoint that individual.

Step 7 – Probation and Monitoring

All appointments to the Services are subject to a probationary period of six calendar months. During this period the individual's performance, conduct, suitability for the role and adherence to safeguarding expectations will be closely monitored.

A formal review meeting will take place after **three months between** the post holder and their Line Manager to discuss progress, training needs, conduct, and any areas requiring improvement. Additional informal supervision meetings may be arranged where needed, particularly for roles involving direct work with children and young people.

At the end of the six-month probationary period, and subject to a satisfactory report by the relevant Line Manager or Head of **Section**, the employee will be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probation. Where performance, conduct or safeguarding practice has not yet reached the required standard, the probationary period may be extended for up to a further three months.

If, during the probationary period, an employee commits an act of gross misconduct or there are significant safeguarding concerns, the Services reserve the right to terminate employment immediately in line with the Disciplinary Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Completion of probation is conditional upon all safer recruitment checks remaining satisfactory and upon the individual demonstrating behaviour and professional conduct consistent with the values and safeguarding responsibilities of the Services.



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Induction Programme

All new employees will receive a structured induction programme, coordinated and completed by the HR Team, which introduces them to the Services, our procedures, safeguarding expectations, values and working practices. The induction will outline all mandatory training that must be completed during the initial weeks and months of employment, including safeguarding training, health and safety, Behaviour expectations and any role-specific requirements. HR will ensure that induction documentation and training records are completed, recorded and stored appropriately, while Line Managers remain responsible for supporting new staff in their roles and identifying any further training needs.

Recruitment Monitoring

The Services recruit employees on the basis of their skills, experience and suitability for the role. We are committed to ensuring that no applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, age, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities or working patterns.

To monitor fairness in recruitment and meet our duties under equality legislation, all applicants are asked to complete a confidential recruitment monitoring form. This form is separated from the application form upon receipt and is not seen by anyone involved in shortlisting or selection. The information is used only for monitoring and evaluating our recruitment processes.

Exit Interviews

All employees who leave the Services voluntarily will be offered an exit interview before their final day of employment. The exit interview provides an opportunity to explore the reasons for leaving, gather feedback on working practices, and identify any themes or areas for improvement. Findings will be reviewed by senior management, with confidentiality maintained. The completed exit interview record will be placed on the employee's personnel file.

Recruitment Complaints

Applicants who believe they have been treated unfairly during the recruitment process, or who feel that the Services have not followed employment law or Equality Act requirements, may request a review of the decision. Any complaint will be handled in line with the procedures and timescales set out in the Services' Complaints Policy. Applicants will be informed of the outcome following investigation

References

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Referrals Policy
- DBS Referral Form
- Application Form (Internal)
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Monitoring Form
- Applicant Reference Report

Monitoring and Review

The Centre Manager holds operational responsibility for ensuring that this Policy is implemented effectively across the Services. The HR Team is responsible for administering recruitment processes, maintaining all vetting records, and ensuring that safer recruitment procedures are followed in practice. The CEO provides overall governance oversight and ensures that the Policy remains aligned with statutory safeguarding guidance, employment law and KCSIE requirements.

This Policy will be reviewed at least once a year, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or organisational needs change. Any improvements identified through monitoring, exit interviews, recruitment feedback or safeguarding learning will be incorporated into the next revision.

Employees are encouraged to suggest ways this Policy can be enhanced and to raise any concerns about its operation in practice.

This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

After reading this Policy, you should be able to:

- the purpose of the Recruitment and Vetting Policy and how it operates;
- how safer recruitment processes are applied across the Services and how

concerns are prevented, identified and managed;

– their individual responsibilities within the recruitment and vetting process.

Any employee who is unsure about any aspect of this Policy should seek clarification from their Line Manager, Centre Manager or HR.

Policy Review

The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring this Policy is implemented effectively across the Services. The CEO will review this Policy at least once a year, or sooner if statutory guidance, legislation or organisational needs change, to ensure it remains up to date and fully compliant with safer recruitment requirements. Any amendments will be communicated to all staff and updated versions will be made available on the Services' shared systems.

Authorisation and Signature

This Policy is the authorised version agreed by the CEO of The Services.

All employees are expected to follow this policy and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.



Ludivine Parmentier

Chief Executive Officer

Safeguarding Contact Appendix – Oxfordshire (The Services)

Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

For reporting safeguarding concerns and making referrals.

Telephone (Office Hours): 0345 050 7666

Emergency Out of Hours (EDT): 0800 833 408

Email – Children’s Social Care: mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Secure Email: mash-secure@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

For allegations against staff, concerns about adults in positions of trust, and advice on risk assessments following DBS disclosures.

Telephone: 01865 810603

Email: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Secure Email: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk.cjism.net

LADO Duty Line Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am–4:30pm

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)

For statutory guidance, policies, escalation procedures, training and local safeguarding thresholds.

Website: www.oscb.org.uk

General Enquiries: oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Training Support: training@oscb.org.uk

Police – Immediate Risk

If a child is at immediate risk of harm:

999 – Emergency

101 – Non-Emergency



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NSPCC Helpline (for advice or reporting concerns)

Helpline (Professionals & Public): 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The Services Internal Safeguarding Contacts

(To be customised for Orchard Therapeutic Farm & Care Services)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): *Kim Cook- Centre Manager*

Deputy DSL(s): *Alex Smith – Assistant Head of Centre*

Safeguarding Governor: *Ludivine Parmentier - CEO*

Internal Email for Safeguarding Concerns: *insert your safeguarding inbox*