



Safer Recruitment Policy

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General GFC Policy



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General GFC Policy



Contents

Introduction	4
Legal and Framework.	4
Retention and Storage of Information.	6
Applications.	6
Recruitment and Selection Procedure.	6
The Selection Process.	6
Interview..	7
Pre-employment checks.	7
Overseas Checks.	9
Agency Staff	9

General GFC Policy



Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of Gloucester Family Care LTD's recruitment process for those who wish to join our team. This policy aims to safeguard children, young people and our GFC family. The policy has been designed to take a planned and structured approach to recruitment and will help to:

- minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- ensure we select the right person for the role
- make sure the process is fair
- make sure there are records of the process for future reference.

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff will be provided with training in Safer Recruitment and will be responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

Legal and Framework

This policy should be read alongside the legislation, regulations and guidance that govern safer recruitment, safeguarding and employment practice in children's services. GFC will apply this policy in line with the following framework, as amended from time to time:

- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, in particular Regulations 32 and 33 and Schedule 2;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards;
- relevant GOV.UK and Disclosure and Barring Service guidance on safer recruitment, DBS checks, barred list checks, right to work checks and overseas criminal record checks.

Where there is any conflict between this policy and current legislation or statutory guidance, GFC will follow the legislation and guidance and will update this policy accordingly.

GFC bases its safer recruitment arrangements on Regulations 32 and 33 and Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. This policy is intended to support lawful, fair and robust recruitment practices that promote the welfare of children and young people and help prevent unsuitable people from working in our services.

These regulations ensure that we can safely recruit:

- staff we intend to employ
- staff employed by someone else (agency staff)

To work for GFC, in line with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, applicants will be required to provide or undergo, as applicable, the following checks and information before employment is confirmed:

- proof of identity, including a recent photograph and current address;
- evidence of the person's right to work in the United Kingdom;
- an enhanced DBS certificate at the appropriate level for the role, including children's barred list information where the role amounts to regulated activity;
- two written references, including one from the most recent employer where applicable, covering the last five years of employment where reasonably practicable;
- verification, as far as reasonably practicable, of the reason why previous employment or positions working with children or vulnerable adults ended;
- documentary evidence of qualifications relevant to the role;
- a full employment history with a satisfactory written explanation for any gaps in employment;
- online and social media checks based on publicly available information
- where relevant, verification that an individual has not been barred from their registered profession;
- where relevant, overseas criminal record information or equivalent evidence and any additional risk assessment required.

Retention and Storage of Information

Recruitment records will be retained in line with legal and regulatory requirements. Records relating to unsuccessful applicants will normally be kept for 6–12 months to allow the organisation to respond to any queries or potential discrimination claims. Records relating to successful applicants will be retained for the duration of employment and for a further 6 years after employment ends. All personal data will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised staff, and kept no longer than necessary in accordance with data protection (GDPR) principles; once the retention period has expired, records will be disposed of securely (for example, by shredding paper copies and securely deleting electronic files).

If a candidate is successfully recruited by GFC, all information in relation to Safer Recruitment that has been collated and processed will be stored in a centralised record on CHARMS. (Please see appendix 1).

Applications

The advertisement is GFC's first opportunity to communicate a clear safeguarding message. Every advert for a role will include a statement about our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and will make clear that appointment is subject to satisfactory safer recruitment checks, including an enhanced DBS check at the appropriate level for the role. Prospective applicants will be supplied with a job description,

person specification, key information relating to terms, conditions and procedures, and the application form.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

The Selection Process

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require a face-to-face interview of shortlisted candidates. Shortlisting will normally be carried out by at least two members of the GFC team against the published person specification. Applications will be scrutinised for consistency, completeness and any anomalies, including unexplained gaps in employment, and appropriate online searches of publicly available information may be undertaken for shortlisted candidates as part of the recruitment process.

Prior to interview, all applicants will be required to complete an Application Form appropriate to the role for which they are applying, containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role.

Interview

Following successful shortlisting, applicants will be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills, experience and suitability to work with children and young people will be explored in more detail. At least one member of the interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training. Wherever possible, the panel will include the hiring manager or deputy together with a second panel member to provide appropriate challenge and oversight of the safer recruitment process.

On occasions an initial telephone interview may be undertaken during the selection process, the formal interview will always be face-to-face.

During the formal interview the following criteria will be met:

- A set of questions will be agreed and used consistently for each candidate.
- Safeguarding questions will be asked and recorded.
- The candidate's responses will be recorded and measured against an agreed framework.
- Interview notes and scores will be kept on file.

During interview, Candidates will always be required to:

- explain satisfactorily any outstanding gaps in employment and provide a document or amendment to the application form to evidence these.

- explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters
- declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS
- declare if they are barred from their registered profession
- demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

Pre-employment checks

GFC will carry out a range of pre-employment checks for all prospective employees, bank staff and relevant volunteers before they start work. Online searches of publicly available information will be completed for shortlisted candidates to help identify issues that may need to be explored at interview; any findings will be considered fairly, proportionately and in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements. Any wider ongoing monitoring of staff online activity is managed under separate organisational policies and procedures.

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, young people and vulnerable adults.

All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification for the role for which the applicant has applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- The applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record.
- Whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired).
- Whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults or behaviour towards children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- The candidate's suitability for working with children and young people.
- The candidate's suitability for this post.

Where organisations only provide factual references limited to dates of employment, GFC will make reasonable attempts to obtain confirmation of any safeguarding concerns and whether the applicant is considered suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. All attempts made and any limitations in the information available will be recorded on file.

General GFC Policy



GFC will compare all references with any information given on the Application Form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the applicant for clarification.

GFC will contact each referee by email, seeking confirmation of their identity by receiving an authentic organisational response from a company email address confirming the role, employment and telephone number of the referee.

GFC will make reasonable attempts to contact referees by telephone to verify that references were prepared by them and that the information provided is accurate. A record of this verification check will be kept on file.

Before employment commences, GFC will verify identity, right to work in the UK, relevant qualifications and professional registrations where required, obtain and scrutinise references, and complete an enhanced DBS check at the appropriate level for the role for all prospective permanent staff, bank staff and relevant volunteers who will work with children and young people.

GFC will request checks in line with the DBS guidelines:

- an enhanced DBS certificate may disclose convictions, cautions or other information in accordance with the applicable DBS filtering rules and relevant legislation;
- it may also contain relevant non-conviction information from local police records where the chief officer reasonably believes it should be disclosed;
- where the role constitutes regulated activity with children, GFC will obtain children's barred list information as part of the enhanced DBS process;
- where information disclosed raises concern, GFC will complete a written risk assessment and determine suitability before any appointment is confirmed.

If candidates have worked in a position involving work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, GFC will endeavour to verify, as far as reasonably practicable, the reason why their previous employment or position ended and if any safeguarding concerns were presented.

In exceptional circumstances, and only where permitted by law and regulation, a new permanent member of staff may start work before all checks in Schedule 2 are complete where identity has been verified, an enhanced DBS check has been obtained, the individual is appropriately supervised, and a written risk assessment has been approved by a senior manager. Any outstanding checks must be pursued without delay and recorded.

General GFC Policy



Overseas Checks

GFC will ensure that all prospective staff have their right to work in the UK checked before employment begins. If there is any uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, GFC will follow current GOV.UK guidance and retain evidence of the check completed.

If a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, GFC will consider whether additional overseas criminal record information, certificates of good conduct or other relevant evidence should be obtained, taking account of the role, the country or countries involved, and the period spent abroad. GFC will follow current GOV.UK guidance where available. If equivalent checks cannot be obtained, GFC will record the steps taken and complete a written risk assessment before any appointment is confirmed.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff; this includes obtaining an Enhanced DBS.

Agency Staff

If agency staff are used by GFC, written confirmation will be obtained from the agency that it has completed the relevant suitability checks required for the role, including identity checks, right to work, references, qualifications where relevant, and an enhanced DBS check at the appropriate level. The identity of any agency worker will be checked by GFC before they are allowed to work in any of our services, to ensure that the person attending is the person supplied by the agency.

If an agency worker is required at short notice and has not been used previously, GFC will still verify identity on arrival and obtain written confirmation from the agency that all relevant suitability checks have been carried out. Where any information is outstanding, the worker will not be used unless a lawful and documented risk-managed decision has been made by a senior manager.