

# SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff and volunteers is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. As an employer, People First Independent Advocacy (PFIA) expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. In order to help safeguard and promote the welfare of everyone in its care, PFIA is committed to a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy. Members of the HR Department and the Senior Leadership Team have completed Safer Recruitment Training.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse or are otherwise unsuited to working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, by having appropriate recruitment procedures in place.

PFIA has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

The policy objective is to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at PFIA.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to:

- Ensure that PFIA has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with relevant legislation
- Monitor compliance with these policies and procedures

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the HR Function involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that PFIA operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers.
- Promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at every stage of the procedure.

The Trustees have delegated responsibility to the CEO and appointed members of the Senior Leadership Team to lead in all appointments. Trustees may be involved in senior staff appointments.

### **4. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

#### **4.1 Advertising**

To ensure equality of opportunity, PFIA will advertise vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible. This normally means external adverts, however, in a few cases; this can be internal adverts only. Some posts may be filled by internal merit-based promotions. Any advertisement will make clear PFIA commitment to safeguarding. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation and ICO Employment Practices Code.

#### **4.2 Application Forms**

PFIA uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition, all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police and/or professional regulatory body's if appropriate.

### **4.3 Job Description and Person Specification**

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role. The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, where applicable.

### **4.4 Interviews**

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and the same panel will see all the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process. At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed following the end of the recruitment programme.

### **4.5 Offer of appointment and new employee process**

The appointment of all new employees is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Certificate, references, medical questionnaire and copies of qualifications and proof of identity. A personnel file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment. The HR Department will confirm that all paperwork has been received and then a start date can be agreed.

### **4.6 References**

References for the successful applicant will be sent for immediately following interview. Two professional references must be provided. One must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer. These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. PFIA does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives. Employment is subject to these references being satisfactory.

#### **4.7 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at People First.

#### **4.8 DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate**

Almost all staff at PFIA require an 'Enhanced DBS Certificate (in some cases a DBS certificate with a Barred List is required and in some cases a 'standard' certificate is appropriate). The appropriate DBS Certificate will be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee. All new staff are required to join the update service and a rolling programme for current staff is in place to join the update service. All Volunteers will be risk assessed and will be subject to the same checks as members of staff, as appropriate, and we also request them to register with the DBS update service. See the PFIA Disclosure and Barring Service Policy for further information.

#### **4.9 Prohibition Checks (Teaching and EEA)**

A Prohibition Check will also be carried out before the commencement of employment of any new employee working within the Hospitality Academy, if appropriate.

#### **4.10 Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status**

All applicants invited to attend an interview will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with guidance set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS Code of Practice Regulations. In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

#### **4.11 Overseas checks**

All new employees where persons have lived outside the UK are subject to additional checks in accordance with Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.

#### **4.12 Record Retention**

PFIA will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be destroyed. The 6 month retention period allows People First to deal with any data access requests, recruitment queries or to respond to any complaints made to an Employment Tribunal. All information retained on employees is kept on SAGE HR.

### **5. EMPLOYMENT**

#### **5.1 Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify PFIA policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding Policy and make clear the

expectation and codes of conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

## **5.2 Centralised Register of Members of Staff**

In addition to the staff record kept on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the HR Function.

The Centralised Register contains details of the following:-

- all employees who are employed to work for PFIA;
- all others who have been chosen by PFIA to work in the organisation. This will cover volunteers and Trustees.

## **5.3 Ongoing Employment**

PFIA recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff and will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/Appraisal process.

## **5.4 Leaving Employment**

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of abuse against children, young people and vulnerable adults are raised. In cases relating to the behaviour of an employee (these behaviours are within the context of four categories of abuse (i.e.: physical, sexual and emotional and neglect) the Disciplinary Policy will apply.

In cases of dismissal (or resignation) due to the above behaviour, PFIA will inform the relevant authorities of the circumstances surrounding the employee's departure.

## **5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

A table setting out the specific process and responsibilities is followed by the HR Function and all other members of staff involved in the recruitment process. (This table can be requested from the HR Function).

**Approved by Trustees - February 2019**

**Review date by Head of Business and Development- February 2020**