

# Circles Network Policy

## Safer Recruitment Policy

Previously Recruitment, Selection and Induction Policy

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Circles Network Human Resources

# Safer Recruitment Policy

## Purpose

This policy aims to ensure a strategic and professional approach to recruitment, selection, and induction within the Charity. The safe recruitment of staff in Circles Network is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the adults and children within our care. As an employer, the Charity expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We aim to ensure that the Charity promotes equality and diversity and has practices in place to attract, select and retain the best skilled people for the work within Circles Network.

Further information regarding our commitment to equality can be found in our Equality Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Further information regarding our volunteer recruitment can be found in our Volunteer Policy and our Young Volunteer Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment, selection, and induction of all staff and volunteers in Circles Network. This policy should be read in conjunction with the volunteer and young volunteer policy.

All employees involved in the recruitment, selection, and induction processes and in the management of employees on probation must follow this policy and the practices set out in this document.


Any third party acting or assisting the Charity in these procedures must act in accordance with this policy and the practices set out in this document.

The Recruitment Manager is responsible for providing the third party with this policy prior to any involvement in these procedures.

The aim of this recruitment policy is as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities, and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation including the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) and The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG)
- To ensure that the Charity meets its commitments to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults by carrying out all the necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy. The recruitment and selection should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit 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, relevant safeguarding legislation, and statutory guidance. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process. The Charity aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Circles Network.

## Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the trustees to:

- Ensure the Charity has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with legal requirements.
- Monitor the Charity's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the CEO and other Managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the Charity operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the Charity.
  - To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
  - Promote welfare of children young people and adults at every stage of the procedure.

## Recruitment and selection procedure

### Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the Charity will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible, normally this entails an internal advertisement for one week then an external advertisement. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR. Circles Network is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults. This is clearly highlighted to potential candidates right from the beginning.

### Application Forms

Circles Network uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete a form containing questions about their academic and full employment history, their right to work in the UK and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form will not be shortlisted. The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CV's alone will not be accepted. It is unlawful for the Charity to employ anyone who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults to apply for a position at the Charity. 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 referral to the police and/or the DBS.

## Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the 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.

## References

References for successful applicants will be sent for immediately after a verbal job offer is made. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after they have made their current employer aware. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the Charity. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. In the event it is not possible to obtain a reference from a previous employer, such as an individual not having previous employment, these individuals should be offered regular supervision in their position.

Referees should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference. The Charity does not accept open references, testimonials, or references from relatives.

## Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, either on screen or in person and a minimum of two interviewers will observe the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the tasks listed in the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria. Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstances of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form. 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 six months after the recruitment programme.

## Offer of appointment and new employee process

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Charity's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the Charity considers to be satisfactory.

A recruitment checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained in personnel files.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks**

The Charity applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS or PVG in respect of all positions at Circles Network. It is the Charity's policy that the DBS/PVG disclosure must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee. A risk assessment will be completed for any visitors onsite that do not have a current DBS/PVG.

It is the Charity's policy to re-check employees' DBS/PVG Certificates every three years and in addition, any employee who takes leave for more than three months (i.e. sick leave, maternity leave, career break etc) must sign a declaration to confirm they have not committed a criminal conviction. Any colleague who takes leave for more than nine months must be re-checked before they return to work by applying for a new DBS/PVG check.

Members of staff are aware of their obligation to inform the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place. DBS/PVG checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence. An annual declaration form will be sent to every colleague to inform us of any changes/cautions/convictions.

### **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of approximately £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant. This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers.

The Charity will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the Certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, i.e. enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information. The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

### **Dealing with convictions**

Circles Network is a Registered Charity in England and Wales (No. 1043601) and in Scotland (No. SC038068), a Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales (No. 2972700). Registered Office: The Penthouse, Coventry Road, Cawston, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9JP.



The Charity operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Please also see 'Recruitment of Ex-offenders' policy and procedure.

Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and:

- the nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the HR Manager. A decision will be made following this meeting. If relevant information (whether about previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the HR Manager, recruitment manager and CEO will evaluate all risk factors mentioned above before a position is offered or confirmed.

We will not recruit anyone who is barred from working with children.

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

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the Charity 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 by the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The Charity does not discriminate on the grounds of age. Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

### **Medical Fitness**

The Charity is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at Circles Network, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed. All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role. The Charity is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

### **Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the Charity's policies and procedures and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

## Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in the HR department and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is also kept.

This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Human Resources Department.

The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following: -

- All employees who are employed to work at the Charity;
- All others who have been chosen by the Charity to work in regular contact with children or adults. This will cover volunteers, governors, and people brought into the Charity to provide additional teaching or activities.

A designated Trustee will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register.

## Record Retention/Data Protection

The Charity is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. If an applicant is successful in their application, Circles Network will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness, and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the Charity to discharge its obligations as an employer. This documentation will be retained by the Charity for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with Circles Network. All information retained on employees is kept electronically in the Human Resources Drive that only they have access to. The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with the Charity's activities. Circles Network will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of six months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e. shredded). The six-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) [DPA 18].

## Ongoing Employment

Circles Network 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. The Charity will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedures.

## Volunteers

The Charity will request an enhanced DBS disclosure on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults at or on behalf of Circles Network. Under no circumstances will the Charity permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults. It is the Charity's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with Circles Network for nine consecutive months or more. Any volunteers who have been away from the charity for three months or more are required to sign a declaration to state they have not committed an offence. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the Charity regularly may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the Charity to obtain up-to-date criminal records information without delay prior to each current activity in which a volunteer participates.



In addition, the Charity will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances.

This may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Formal or informal information provided by staff, parents, and other volunteers.
- Character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- An informal safer recruitment interview.
- Monitoring and Evaluation

The Human Resources Department will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout Circles Network. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the volunteer policy and young volunteer policy.