Good News NWK Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Good News NWK we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff to share this commitment. We adhere to statutory responsibilities under Working Together to Safeguard Children, and Ofsted's Childrens Homes: Recruiting Staff guidance.

This policy outlines the robust recruitment procedures we follow to ensure that only individuals who are suitable to work with children and vulnerable people are employed by our home.

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2. Aims and Objectives

- To deter unsuitable individuals from applying to work with children.
- To identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children.
- To ensure that every stage of the recruitment process promotes safeguarding and is in line with Ofsted's expectations and best practice.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to all recruitment activities for roles that involve contact with or responsibility for children.

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4. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

4.1 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

- Every vacancy will have a clearly defined job description and person specification that includes safeguarding responsibilities.
- All adverts will make clear that safeguarding is a core responsibility and that rigorous checks of successful applicants will be conducted.

4.2 Application Forms

- All applicants must complete a standardised application form.
- CVs alone will not be accepted.
- Incomplete or unclear applications will not be considered.

4.3 Shortlisting

- All applications will be scrutinised to ensure they meet the essential criteria.
- Any gaps in employment or frequent job changes will be explored and clarified if shortlisted.

5. Employment History and References

5.1 Employment History

- Applicants must provide a full employment history, including:
  - Specific dates (month and year).
  - Reason for leaving each position.
  - Explanation for any gaps.
  - Identification of any roles that involved supporting a child or vulnerable person

5.2 Information to be obtained regarding employment history

- For any applicants employed since the implementation of this policy, we will seek clarity **as far as is reasonably possible**, regarding the reason for leaving roles that involved working with children or vulnerable people. Priority will be given to any roles held within the last 5 years, and it should be noted that Ofsted guidance is clear that not all previous employers have to be contacted unless there is a specific cause for concern.
- Any conversations held with previous employers where such topics are discussed will be detailed on the staff member's file.
- Applicants will be asked to list details of two referees on their application forms, but Good News NWK may request further references from any previous employer listed.
- References will only be sought once an offer of employment has been made.
- All referees will be asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, and whether there were any safeguarding concerns, allegations or disciplinary actions. Where the written reference provided is 'factual' in that it only details dates of employment, this reference will be stored on file, and more information attempted to be gained form a follow up telephone call, known as 'reference verification'.
- Verification of all references obtained will be carried out by telephone, again asking why the employee left their post, and if there were any safeguarding concerns. It is also good practise to enquire as to whether the applicant has been known to them by any other names. Where an employer declines to comment on any of the above due to company policy being to only provide a 'factual reference' this declination will be clearly recorded under the reference section of the employee's file. Where the declining employer is part of a registered organisation (e.g. Ofsted or CQC), they will be reminded of their duty to share such information in order to safeguard children and informed that a LADO referral may need to be submitted due to their failure to comply with safer recruitment guidelines.

- Where both the written reference and the verification of this fail to yield any more than factual information, where possible, an alternative reference source will be sought, or if this reference relates to the employees most recent post, character references will be utilised where possible to substantiate references.
- Character references will only be used to substantiate employment references, not as an alternative to them, unless the applicant has not had sufficient prior employment to be able to obtain two professional references.
- We will not accept open references or references provided by the applicant.

5.3 Inability to obtain references or reason for leaving a post

- As far as is possible, references will be sought for any role within the applicants last 5 years of employment and any role that has involved working with children or vulnerable adults. However, it is noted that there may be situations where this is not possible, for example due to a company no longer operating, records no longer being available due to the length of time that has elapsed since the applicant held employment with the company in question, or the death of an employer. If this is the case, this information will be detailed within the reference section of the employees file, and an alternative reference will be sought, until there are at least 2 satisfactory references on file.
- Guidance from Ofsted is clear not all previous employers have to be contacted unless there is a previous cause for concern. If any concerns are held by any recruiting manager, then additional references will be sought accordingly.

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6. Pre-Employment Checks

Before appointment, the following checks will be undertaken:

- **Enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.**
- **Verification of identity and address.**
- **Verification of right to work in the UK.**
- **Verification of qualifications.**
- **At least two satisfactory references, including from the most recent employer.**
- **Overseas criminal record checks (also known as a 'Certificate of Good Conduct') for applicants who have lived outside the UK for a period of a year or more within the last 10 years.**

All applicants must provide the paper copy of their DBS certificate and a verified copy of this added to their HR files before employment can commence.

Prior to driving any work vehicle, employees with a valid driving license will be asked for consent to carry out an online check of their licence to ensure its validity and to raise awareness of any convictions

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7. Interviews

- All managers involved in interviews and recruitment will undergo safer recruitment training.
- A structured interview will be conducted by at least two trained staff members.
- Safeguarding-related questions will be included to assess attitudes, values, and understanding of child protection.

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8. Probation and Monitoring

- All appointments are subject to a probationary period during which performance and conduct, including adherence to safeguarding responsibilities, will be closely monitored. Probation will only be deemed passed once all criteria has been satisfactorily met.
- Any concerns arising during this period may result in probation being extended, or termination of employment.
- All staff will be encouraged to register on the update system so that their suitability for the role can be monitored on a regular basis. All staff members will have DBS checks carried out annually whether on the update service or not.

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9. Training and supervision

- The registered manager must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction, and that tasks within this are referred to, worked upon and signed off throughout the induction period.
- New staff will be made familiar with the Home's management hierarchy and reporting structure as well as safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures through the induction process
- Staff will receive ongoing safeguarding training and updates as part of their professional development.
- Staff will receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.

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10. Use of agency staff

Prior to utilising any agency staff, the following measures will be undertaken:

- A profile of the member of staff which contains a clear photograph will be obtained directly from the agency. This will be used to check the identity of the staff member attending the shift. If a manager is not present at the time when the agency staff member is due to arrive on shift, staff present should have been given the full name

and photograph of the staff member in order that they can ensure the correct person has arrived.

- Evidence of the agency staff members suitability to work with children must have been obtained from their agency. This should include evidence that a DBS check and relevant suitability checks have been carried out by the agency. This will usually be detailed on the profile sent by the agency.
- A profile for each agency staff member used should be saved to the 'Agency Staff' folder on Bright HR.
- An agency induction should be carried out with any new agency member of staff prior to or at the beginning of their first shift at each home.

NB an agency staff member will never be in sole charge of the home, and where at all possible, regular agency staff who are known to the children will be requested ahead of new staff.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to relevant legislation, guidance, or best practices.

Approved by: Hannah Gausden, Assistant Operations Manager
Date Approved: 18/06/25
Date reviewed: 22/7/25
Date of next review: 22/07/27