



## **Safer Recruitment Policy**

### **Our Commitment**

Dorset Pathways holds the firm belief that ensuring the safety and well-being of all children, young individuals, staff, and visitors within our premises is a matter of paramount importance.

As an organized entity, we make a steadfast commitment to exert our utmost efforts in maintaining Dorset Pathways as a secure environment for all those we engage with.

This commitment encompasses the establishment of robust and secure recruitment procedures. We adhere to the principles of safer recruitment and maintain a consistent and impartial approach to staff appointments. All relevant guidelines and equal opportunities legislation are strictly adhered to, with no discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, marital status, employment status, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, language, national origins, faith, religion, belief, disability, or age.

Dorset Pathways is wholeheartedly dedicated to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and young individuals. This dedication is shared and upheld by all our staff members.

### **Purpose of This Document**

- Clearly outlines the roles and obligations of individuals within the organization.
- Applies universally to all individuals associated with Dorset Pathways, including staff, stakeholders, volunteers, and contractors.
- Aligns with our organizational objectives.
- Derives its foundation from current legislation, governmental directives, and best practices. References to these sources can be found at the end of this policy.

Our conviction is that ensuring secure recruitment practices is central to the safeguarding of children and young individuals. We are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the welfare of these individuals and minimizing the potential for harm from those in positions of trust. We have in place robust procedures for secure recruitment and selection, aimed at identifying, deterring, and preventing the entry of unsuitable individuals into roles involving children.

Dorset Pathways places high importance on adhering to the guidance presented in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (September 2022) by the Department for Education (DFE), as well as the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' report and the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Policies and Procedures Manual. We remain vigilant and updated by subscribing to relevant updates to ensure our policies and practices remain current.

### **Basic Principles**

We ensure that every individual associated with our organization, particularly those who children and young individuals perceive as safe and trustworthy adults (e.g., volunteers, contractor-employed



staff, and those indirectly involved with our young individuals), is subjected to appropriate measures.

Our interpretation of safer recruitment practice involves thorough assessment of applicants, validation of identity and educational or vocational qualifications, solicitation of professional references, verification of previous employment history, and assurance that candidates possess the requisite:

- Motivation and affinity for the role.
- Skills, attributes, and knowledge to effectively and securely fulfil the role.
- Physical and mental fitness for the responsibilities.

This approach also encompasses interviews and the implementation of Enhanced Criminal Record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Advertisement and Application Procedure**

Dorset Pathways ensures candidates possess a clear understanding of the role and its expectations through a comprehensive Job Description and Person Specification, provided alongside the Application Form.

Job advertisements provide pertinent information about the role and emphasize our commitment to safeguarding, highlighting the necessity for enhanced DBS disclosures.

Selection processes involve a completed application form, shortlisting, interviews, and satisfactory employment checks.

Candidates are required to submit:

- A current photo ID (passport or driver's license).
- Proof of address (dated no more than 3 months prior).
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
- A comprehensive application form, excluding gaps in employment (CVs are not accepted).
- Two recent employment referees (testimonials are not accepted).
- Birth certificate (if available).

Dorset Pathways ensures:

- Legitimate right to work in the UK.
- Complete and accurate application forms with no unexplained gaps or inconsistencies.
- Verification of references via direct contact with referees.
- Investigation of any referred disciplinary matters.
- Verification of physical and mental suitability for the role.
- Obtaining an enhanced DBS check before appointment (staff are encouraged to register for the update service).
- Obtaining a police check or certificate of good conduct for overseas and former overseas staff.
- Confirmation of professional qualifications and training, retaining copies of certificates.



- Conducting online searches as part of due diligence.

### **Interview Process**

All candidates undergo interviews conducted by two staff members, with at least one possessing safer recruitment training. Standardized interview questions are utilized, and responses are documented in writing.

The Equality Act necessitates reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process for applicants disclosing disabilities.

Interviews take the form of comprehensive face-to-face sessions, or remote interviews via platforms such as Skype or FaceTime if an in-person interview isn't feasible.

Selection evaluates candidates against job requirements and their compatibility with working with children and young individuals.

Candidates may be assigned specific tasks relevant to the role, such as analysing educational opportunities and materials or evaluating ideas and approaches for learning mentors.

Candidates are expected to:

- Express their attitudes toward children and young individuals and their motivation for this field.
- Demonstrate an understanding of safeguarding.
- Showcase their ability to uphold our commitment to safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare.
- Discuss their capacity to maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries.
- Reflect on their emotional resilience when dealing with challenging behaviors.
- Share their perspectives on the exercise of authority.
- Provide concrete examples from work experience that support their application and exemplify the above attributes.

### **Safeguarding (Warner) Interviews**

Dorset Pathways caters to highly vulnerable children, including Looked After children, children with disabilities, and those who may have encountered abuse or trauma. Staff members might find themselves in situations where they hold sole responsibility for a child, such as during off-site activities.

In line with recommendations outlined in 'The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Selection, Development and Management of Staff in Children's Homes' (Warner, 1992) and The Bichard Report, Dorset Pathways conducts assessments of personal qualities. These assessments may involve activities, observations, or questionnaires.

Hence, as part of our interview process, we also evaluate:

- Motivation.

September 22



- Integrity and values.
- Collaborative interactions with students.
- Employment of therapeutic approaches in education.
- Demonstrated authority.
- Accountability.
- Adherence to ethical standards.
- Emotional resilience.

Elements of these assessments encompass:

- Identification of necessary support.
- Meticulous documentation to substantiate findings.
- Provision of feedback to candidates.

Training is provided to staff prior to conducting these specialized interviews.

### **Selection**

Candidate evaluation incorporates core data from the Application Form, interview records, and the Job Description. No individual related to or connected with a candidate may make the selection decision.

Additional information or meetings may be requested or organized with shortlisted candidates if deemed necessary.

### **Records and Security**

Upon selection, successful candidates are required to provide or complete:

- Bank details/tax forms.
- Signed terms and conditions (contract and job description).
- Online safeguarding training.
- Medical form.
- Emergency contact details and next of kin information.
- Signed handbooks, relevant policies (including the Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Code of Behaviour, Privacy Notice, and Standard Privacy Policy).

An HR Checklist is completed to ensure all required paperwork is in place before commencement.

Dorset Pathways verifies all paperwork and conducts relevant checks or completes necessary risk assessments before an employee commences work.

New employee details are added to the Staff Central Register (SCR), accessible to HR, Directors, and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) exclusively.

Each (new) employee has a paper-based file stored securely in a central cabinet, retained throughout their employment and for six years plus the current year post-employment. Files are securely destroyed afterward.



Unsuccessful applications are retained and securely destroyed six months following the appointment.

### **Employment of Agency Staff**

In cases where staff are recruited through agencies, written confirmation of completed checks is invariably obtained and documented.

### **Induction and Training**

Senior staff provide a comprehensive induction, documented and endorsed by the employee. Induction covers all aspects of the role, including Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Accident and Emergency procedures, and First Aid. It also includes specific training on Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures within our organization, as well as expectations regarding safe working practices.

New employees have opportunities to discuss any questions arising from policy documents, such as the KCSI, Dorset Pathways policies, the Code of Conduct, and the Staff Handbook.

### **Hiring Staff or Volunteers with Prior Convictions or Concerns**

Disclosure of prior convictions or arising concerns during recruitment does not automatically terminate the process. Each conviction or concern is individually evaluated, with a risk assessment guiding the decision on whether the recruitment process can proceed.

Dorset Pathways assesses suitability, considering only offenses pertinent to the role. Factors such as the nature of the appointment, offense, age at the time, and frequency are taken into account.

Any individual barred from working with children who applies for, offers, accepts, or undertakes work constituting Regulated Activity commits an offense. Employers are also liable if they knowingly offer or facilitate work with children for a disqualified individual.

### **Upholding a Safe Culture**

To maintain a culture of safeguarding and welfare promotion, we regularly update our Staff Handbook as part of the Induction Process. This ensures clear, up-to-date written statements outlining expected standards of behaviour and boundaries for staff and volunteers.

Dorset Pathways will:

- Set a review date post-induction for ongoing support and further safeguarding training.
- Deliver regular briefings and discussions on pertinent issues during weekly staff meetings.
- Provide effective supervision and staff appraisal processes.
- Conduct daily debriefs with staff directly engaging with students.
- Establish a clear reporting system accessible to staff and concerned individuals.
- Elevate awareness through posters in the work environment, directing concerns to DSLs and providing information about supporting organizations.



## **Monitoring the Process**

Dorset Pathways takes monitoring of recruitment and induction practices seriously, ensuring ongoing safety, informed practices, and prompt issue resolution. This involves spot checks, analysis of staff feedback, assessment of turnover, and evaluation of reasons for departure.

## **Referenced Documents and Links**

[Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual](#)

[Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) \(Sept 2022\)](#)

[Disclosure and Barring Service \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Supervision of activity with children \(DfE\) Statutory Guidance](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#)

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings

[Equality Act 2010](#)

Authored : Directors

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