

Developing Health & Independence Safer Recruitment Policy

Effective Date	March 2018	Date of Next Review	September 2026
Date of Last Review	September 2024	Review Frequency	Bi-Annually
Board Review	N/A		
Reviewers Name	Anne Welch, Corporate Services and Finance Director		
Related Policies and Procedures	Safeguarding (both Adult and Children/Young People) Whistle Blowing Team Leader Handbook		
Equality Impact Assessment	The changes to this policy have been reviewed by the Executive who do not consider it necessary to prepare a separate Equality Impact Assessment for the amendments made.		
Information Governance Assessment	The changes to this policy have been reviewed by the Executive who do not consider it necessary to prepare a separate Information Governance Assessment for the amendments made.		

All organisations and individuals who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or are involved in providing services to them, have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The adoption of safe recruitment practices and procedures is vital in identifying, deterring and rejecting people unsuitable for working with these groups.

The key to safer recruitment is rigorous scrutiny.

The Team Leader Handbook should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Safer Recruitment Practice

Safer recruitment practice puts the safety and welfare of our vulnerable client groups as paramount at every stage of the process. It starts with detailed planning of the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear DHI's commitment to safeguarding. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants. Key elements within this process include:

- ensuring the job description for all posts/roles makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- obtaining and scrutinising information from applicants, and taking up two references and satisfactorily resolving any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies and applicants suitability to assess suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- at least one face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability for the post;
- verifying the successful applicant's identity;
- verifying that they have the Right to Work in the UK (where employed)
- verifying the successful applicant's qualifications where essential to the role;
- checking their previous employment history and experience, including any gaps;

- carrying out an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) where the position is a Regulated Activity and a Basic DBS check for all others.

Where adults do not have a specific role working with children or vulnerable adults, safer recruitment practices still apply.

Commitment to Safeguarding Principles

DHI is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be clearly stated on all advertisements, candidate information, job descriptions and person specifications.

Advertising vacancies

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will include a statement of DHI's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. If the individual is working in "Regulated Activity" reference must also be made to the fact that applicants will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS. All applicants will be required to provide evidence of identity, Right to Work in the UK and qualifications.

The Application

Candidates are required to submit an Application Form and Skills Form (in which the candidate matches their skills and experience to those specified in the Job Role). CVs are acceptable but need to be followed up with the completion of the pre interview questionnaire.

Applications for roles which are advertised internally only are required to complete a Skills Form.

The Job Description and Person Specification

Once a post becomes available, the job description and person specification must be reviewed to ensure compliance with safer recruitment guidance and that it remains accurate. Responsibilities for promotion and safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults must be clearly stated.

Scrutinising and Shortlisting Applications

At least two people must be involved in the process of scrutinising applications and short-listing candidates. It is recommended that at least one member of the panel should have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. DHI will offer all new managers and team leaders training in recruitment which will incorporate safer recruitment practice.

All applications will be checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified will be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant.

All candidates must be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

If invited for interview, the applicant must complete a pre-interview questionnaire which includes a signed statement that the individual is not disqualified from working with vulnerable people or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body and has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs.

The contents of pre- interview questionnaires must not be used to shortlist unless it is obvious an offence will have an effect on the candidate's ability to carry out the role, If a candidate who declares a self-disclosure is successful the recruitment process can be continued if appropriate and comparisons made with the DBS check once received.

The pre-interview questionnaire will also ask for reference information if not previously given (a minimum of two, one of which must be the individual's most recent employer) and when the reference may be taken up.

Interviews

The interview must assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults where this is part of their role.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel should also explore with the candidate any gaps in the candidate's employment history, any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided, attitude towards issues relating to the Code of Conduct such as working with vulnerable groups, using organisational resources and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and motivation and reason for working for the organisation.

As part of the invitation to interview, candidates will be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body.

Candidates will be required to bring evidence of their identity to the interview – a driving license, passport, or other photo card identity will be acceptable.

Interview Panel

All interview panels must have at least two people. Panels should

- Meet in advance to agree the format of the interview and questions
- Be appropriately trained
- Agree any specific questions for individual candidates.

Important questions for those who will be working with children or vulnerable adults are:

- the candidate's attitude toward children, young people and vulnerable adults, including their motivation and reason and their attitudes and behaviour about control and punishment
- their perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults
- their ability to form and maintain professional relationships
- their general understanding of safeguarding and their ability to support DHI's agenda for safeguarding

If required, the panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure

References and DBS Check

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.

One of the two references must be obtained from the person's current or more recent employer.

Any offer of employment will always be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references.

References should always be obtained in writing (this may be via email from an appropriate 'work' email address).

Referees should be asked to comment on work and professional competence and personal qualities, although it should be borne in mind that comments on "personal qualities" can be highly subjective.

References should also specifically request information on the applicant's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults, details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to including those where the sanction has expired. All reference requests should contain a copy of the job description and person specification.

References which are 'testimonials' or are written as a 'To Whom It May Concern' are not acceptable.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

A DBS check will be run on all those who are offered employment, the type of check dependent upon the type of work the individual is undertaking and is described further in Appendix A to this document. As a general rule, the following checks will be made:

Basic Check	All administrative staff and the Board
Enhanced Check	All workers, excluding those listed below
Enhanced with Adult Barring	Workers in Supported Housing
Enhanced with Child Barring	Workers in Young Persons' Services
Service Managers and Directors will have an Enhanced with Adult and Child Barring check.	

There may be a delay in DBS checks being returned and whilst awaiting results, individuals should not lone-work with any client.

On receipt, references must be scrupulously checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily. References must be checked against application forms to verify dates of employment. Managers are advised to read between the lines and verify the authenticity of the referee and if the content is ambiguous or unguarded, seek expansion by telephone. Where further information is required the manager may choose to telephone referees to confirm their views on the candidate and to ensure the information provided is accurate. Details of any contact with referees must also be kept i.e. telephone calls

DBS checks will be repeated and reviewed every three years and on change of role within the organisation where that role requires an increased level of check

Conditional Offer of Appointment

Any offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon the following:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references and discussions with one of these.
- proof of the candidate's identity.
- proof of the candidate's right to work in the UK.
- a satisfactory DBS Disclosure verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post
- completion of any probationary period where applicable

Induction

All new members of staff and volunteers (employment rights are not conferred), will receive an induction. The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme will include information about:

- any written statements of policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention or restraint, intimate care, internet safety, child protection and safeguarding procedures and whistle blowing policy;
- safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff in the organisation;
- how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, managing performance and whistle blowing.
- provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and

This will enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

Induction should also include the scheduling of attendance at adult safeguarding and child protection training as appropriate to the person's role at earliest possible date and within 6 months.

Annual Audit of Processes

The Board and the Executive recognise the importance of safer recruitment practices in protecting our vulnerable clients and as part of their annual safeguarding audit cycle include a sample of appointments made in the previous year.

A report is made to the Board and action points noted and acted upon as required.

Appendix A: Disclosure and Barring Service checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is a process of gathering information about an applicant's possible criminal activity. This includes spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings given by the police.

A DBS check must only be undertaken when necessary, based on the role the individual is undertaking, and must be the minimum required to perform the role.

DHI performs three levels of DBS check:

A **Basic Check** for all administrative staff and the Board

An **Enhanced DBS Check** for all other staff, with the exception of those who undertake a Regulated Activity.

Enhanced DBS Check with Barring List (and/or Child and Adult) for Service Managers, Directors and those who undertake a Regulated Activity.

The check applied to volunteers will be determined by the work which they are undertaking with reference to the closest paid position.

Regulated Activities

Generally, DHI does not provide regulated activities¹ for adults,

DHI does, however, undertake Regulated Activities², with children in the Young Persons' services including working with children unsupervised, and more than 4 days in any 30 day period and specific roles which includes providing advice and guidance.

Line Management

There is a requirement that line managers have the highest level of check (regardless of their own role) of those staff which report to them. All Service Managers will, therefore, have an Enhanced Check with Child and Adult Barring as they either manage the appropriate service or may be required to provide temporary line management.

Positive Result

A positive result does not necessarily preclude an individual for working with DHI and a Risk Assessment will be performed by the Line Manager and signed off by a Director.

More information on Vetting Checks

Proof of Identity

The organisation must establish that the person is who they say they are. This should be verified by formal photographic identity such as a passport or driving licence together with confirmation of current address.

Identity and Immigration (employees only)

In accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, employers have a duty to check whether job applicants are entitled to live and work in the UK. When applicants are invited to interview they should be asked to bring with them evidence of their right to work in the UK. It is important to be sure that the person is who he or she claims to be. The employer must ask to see documentary evidence of identity and British or European Economic Area citizenship, e.g. a British birth certificate, British or EEA passport together with National Insurance Number. ***It is a criminal offence to employ a person who does not have permission to live and work within the UK. The employer or other person(s) making the appointment could be liable for prosecution. The UK Border Agency also require that employers, check, copy and keep the evidence that they have verified. This should be held securely on the personnel file.***

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550197/Regulated_activity_in_relation_to_children.pdf