

Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Statement

At Inclusive Outsource, we are deeply committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who access our mentoring services. This policy sets out our commitment to implementing robust safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff, mentors, and volunteers are suitable to work with our service users.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that creating a culture of vigilance is essential to protect those we support. Our recruitment procedures are designed to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, respond appropriately to concerns about applicants during the recruitment process, ensure all new staff and volunteers receive comprehensive safeguarding induction, and maintain ongoing supervision and training to embed safeguarding in our organisational culture.

This policy applies to all staff, mentors, volunteers, and anyone else who may have contact with service users through our organisation.

Effective Date: [To be added]

Review Date: [To be added annually]

1. Planning and Preparation

Before beginning any recruitment process, we ensure thorough planning to maintain consistency and safeguarding standards. We clearly define all roles with explicit safeguarding responsibilities and allocate appropriate resources and personnel to implement our procedures properly. At least one member of each interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training to ensure best practice is followed throughout the process.

2. Advertising and Role Information

All our advertisements include a clear statement about our commitment to safeguarding and notify applicants that the role requires an Enhanced DBS check with barred list check. We emphasise our commitment to equality and inclusion alongside our safeguarding standards.

Our application packs provide comprehensive information including a detailed role description highlighting safeguarding responsibilities, a person specification outlining required attitudes toward safeguarding, our safer recruitment policy statement, a self-disclosure form for shortlisted candidates, and clear information about our vetting procedures. This transparency ensures applicants understand our expectations from the outset.

3. Application and Shortlisting

We require all applicants to complete our standard application form, with CVs only accepted alongside the full application. This ensures we receive consistent information including full employment history with explanations for any gaps, declaration of any criminal convictions, cautions, or pending prosecutions, and details of at least two referees, including the most recent employer where applicable.

Our shortlisting process involves assessment by at least two people who evaluate candidates against the person specification, with particular attention paid to safeguarding competencies and attitudes toward working with vulnerable groups.

4. Selection Process

Our interview process is designed to thoroughly assess candidates' suitability to work with vulnerable individuals. Interviews are always conducted face-to-face or via video call where necessary, and include specific questions about safeguarding knowledge and attitudes. We explore candidates' motivations for working with neurodivergent young people and use value-based interviewing techniques to assess their suitability for the role.

During the selection process, we assess candidates' ability to establish and maintain professional boundaries, their understanding of vulnerability in neurodivergent populations, their commitment to person-led, respectful support, and their recognition of safeguarding responsibilities. Identity verification with original documents is completed during the interview process.

5. Pre-Employment Checks

Before any appointment is confirmed, we complete a comprehensive range of checks to ensure the suitability of all personnel.

Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List Check

This is required for all positions as our mentors work one-to-one with children and vulnerable adults in regulated activity. These checks are renewed every three years, and we only accept portable DBS certificates with an active update service subscription.

Professional References

We obtain a minimum of two references, including from the most recent employer where possible. Our reference requests include specific questions about suitability to work with vulnerable groups. We make direct contact with referees to clarify any concerns and maintain written confirmation of all reference checks.

Identity and Right to Work Verification

We verify identity through photo ID (passport or driving licence), proof of address, and birth certificate to identify any name changes. We also confirm all appointees have the legal right to work in the UK through appropriate documentation.

Additional Checks

Where relevant to the role, we verify qualifications and professional registrations. We conduct reviews of public online presence for concerning content, with candidates informed this check will be conducted. For candidates who have resided overseas for three months or more in the past five years, we require criminal record checks from those countries, conducting a risk assessment if overseas checks cannot be obtained.

Self-Disclosure Process

Shortlisted candidates complete a self-disclosure form providing an opportunity to confidentially declare relevant information. These forms are submitted in sealed envelopes marked "Confidential" and reviewed as part of our risk assessment process.

6. Risk Assessment Process

When vetting checks raise concerns, we implement a thorough risk assessment process. Any formal offer is placed on hold pending assessment. Each case is evaluated individually, considering the nature and seriousness of any offence, its relevance to working with vulnerable groups, time elapsed since the incident, evidence of change and rehabilitation, level of remorse and insight shown, and potential opportunities for reoffending in the role.

Decisions are made by a panel including the Designated Safeguarding Lead, with clear documentation of the decision-making rationale maintained for our records.

7. Induction and Probation

All new personnel complete comprehensive safeguarding training before any unsupervised contact with service users. This includes review of all organisational policies and procedures, mentoring and supervision during the probationary period, and regular reviews during the first six months.

Our induction programme covers our safeguarding and child protection policies, recognising signs of abuse in neurodivergent individuals, responding to disclosures appropriately, maintaining professional boundaries and conduct, and understanding reporting procedures and key contacts.

8. Maintaining a Safer Culture

We maintain a robust safeguarding culture through regular supervision with safeguarding as a standing agenda item, annual safeguarding refresher training for all personnel, an open culture that encourages concerns to be raised, regular policy reviews and updates, a clear code of conduct signed annually by all staff and volunteers, and exit interviews that include safeguarding questions.

9. Special Considerations

Mentors with Lived Experience

While we value the lived experience of neurodivergence that many of our mentors bring, this does not override safeguarding requirements. All mentors undergo identical vetting regardless of personal experience, with appropriate support provided for those who may find disclosure processes challenging due to their own experiences.

Agency Staff and Contractors

We require written confirmation of all vetting checks from agencies before their staff work with our service users. ID verification is completed on arrival, and clear agreements about safeguarding responsibilities are established.

Volunteers and Students

All volunteers and students are subject to the same vetting requirements as paid staff, though additional supervision arrangements may be implemented based on their role and experience.

10. Record Keeping

We maintain secure records in compliance with data protection legislation. Application forms and interview notes are retained for six months for unsuccessful candidates. We keep permanent records of all vetting check confirmations, risk assessments and decision documentation, training and supervision records, and any safeguarding concerns raised.

In line with guidance, DBS certificates are not retained. Instead, we record the date of check, certificate number, level of check, and decision made.

11. Responding to Concerns

If information suggests someone poses a risk to children or vulnerable adults, we take immediate action to ensure the safety of service users. This includes reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate, full cooperation with any investigations, referral to the DBS for barring consideration where required, and clear documentation of all actions taken.

12. Commitment to Equality and Inclusion

Our safer recruitment practices are implemented fairly and transparently. We ensure no discrimination against protected characteristics, provide reasonable adjustments for applicants with disabilities, handle sensitive information respectfully, and follow special procedures for transgender applicants where needed.

13. Review and Governance

This policy is reviewed annually by senior leadership and trustees to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidance, reflection of best practice, incorporation of learning from recruitment experiences, and continued fitness for purpose.

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Terms of Service

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: [To be confirmed]

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: [To be confirmed]

Email: safeguarding@inclusiveoutsource.co.uk

Phone: [To be added]

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): [Contact details to be added based on location]

Inclusive Outsource is committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment where neurodivergent individuals can thrive. This policy demonstrates our dedication to recruiting only those who share our commitment to safeguarding and will uphold the highest standards of practice.