Safer Recruitment Policy

| Version 7.0 |

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Document Controller	Jonathan Hall
Signature	*J.Hall*

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Summary of Changes (Version 6.0 to Version 7.0)
This policy has been reviewed and updated to strengthen safer recruitment arrangements and improve alignment with current safeguarding expectations for adult education providers.

Key changes include:
• Updated recruitment advertising wording to clarify that successful applicants will be subject to the appropriate level of DBS check relevant to their role, ensuring consistency with statutory disclosure requirements.

• Revised pre-employment vetting requirements relating to Prohibition from Teaching and Section 128 checks to ensure these are undertaken where applicable and in line with current legislation and regulatory guidance.

• Replaced the previous AI-based adverse media screening requirement with a proportionate internet search process using publicly available information, supported by appropriate management review and compliance with data protection and equality legislation.

• Enhanced employment health screening arrangements by replacing the previous fitness declaration approach with a more proportionate occupational health and reasonable adjustment assessment process.

• Improved records management requirements by clarifying retention arrangements for unsuccessful applicants and associated recruitment documentation.

• Strengthened overall consistency and accuracy throughout the policy to better reflect safer recruitment practices within adult education, safeguarding vulnerable adults, and Ofsted-inspected training provision.

1. Introduction

1.1 Staff Power Training (SPT) is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our learners, staff, and visitors. We recognise that a crucial part of this commitment is implementing a robust Safer Recruitment Policy. This policy aims to ensure that we attract, select, and retain the best possible staff who share our commitment to creating a safe and supportive learning environment, and to deter and prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining employment with us. The organisation maintains a Single Central Record as a central register of recruitment and vetting checks to support safeguarding oversight and regulatory compliance.

1.2 Our recruitment and selection processes are designed to be fair, consistent, and transparent, complying with all relevant UK legislation and statutory guidance.

2. Aims of the Policy

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all learners, particularly vulnerable adults.
- Deter unsuitable individuals from applying for roles within our organisation.
- Identify and reject applicants who may pose a risk to learners.
- Ensure all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of their responsibilities and are appropriately trained.
- Establish a consistent and thorough process for all pre-employment checks.
- Comply with the principles of equality and fairness, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of SPT, including:

- Permanent, temporary, and fixed-term employees.
- Agency and third-party staff.
- Contractors and consultants.
- Volunteers.
- Governors or members of the management board.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with key UK legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and its exceptions)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Principles adapted from the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE)

statutory guidance, applied to the context of adult education.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Management Board/Proprietor is responsible for ensuring the organisation complies with all safeguarding duties and that this policy is implemented effectively.

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, providing advice and guidance on safeguarding matters during recruitment, and ensuring all staff receive appropriate training.

5.3 The Human Resources (HR) Department/Manager or designated recruitment personnel is responsible for ensuring that all recruitment processes adhere to this policy, that all required checks are completed and recorded, and that the Single Central Record is maintained.

5.4 Hiring Managers/Interview Panel Members are responsible for following the procedures outlined in this policy, undertaking relevant training, and ensuring safeguarding is a key consideration in their shortlisting and interviewing practices.

5.5 All Staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any safeguarding concerns they may have about a colleague in line with the organisation's Safeguarding and Whistleblowing policies.

6. The Recruitment and Selection Process

6.1 Step 1: Planning and Advertising

- The job description for every role will clearly state the duties and responsibilities, including the responsibility for safeguarding learners.
- The person specification will detail the qualifications, skills, and experience required, and will explicitly state that a commitment to safeguarding is essential.
- All advertisements and recruitment packs will include the following statement: "Staff Power Training is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our learners and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undergo the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check relevant to the duties of the role."

6.2 Step 2: Application and Shortlisting

- All applicants must complete a full application form. CVs will not be accepted in place of a completed application form but may be submitted in addition.
- Application forms will require applicants to provide a full employment history, with explanations for any gaps.
- All application forms will be scrutinised to identify any anomalies or gaps in employment history.
- Shortlisting will be conducted by at least two individuals, who will assess applicants against the criteria in the person specification.

6.3 Step 3: References

- A minimum of two professional references will be sought for all shortlisted candidates prior to interview where possible, and always before an offer of employment is confirmed.

- One reference must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer.
- References will be sought directly from the referee and on official letterhead where possible. Open references or testimonials provided by the candidate will not be accepted.
- Reference requests will ask specific questions about the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable adults and whether they have been the subject of any safeguarding concerns.

6.4 Step 4: The Interview
- The interview panel will consist of at least two people, at least one of whom will have completed accredited Safer Recruitment training.
- The interview will explore the applicant's skills and experience, as well as their attitude and commitment to safeguarding.
- Values-based and situational questions will be used to assess the applicant's understanding of safeguarding issues and professional boundaries.
- Any gaps in employment history or concerns arising from the application form will be explored and resolved.

6.5 Step 5: Pre-Appointment Checks
- No individual will start work until all the following checks have been completed, verified, and recorded on the Single Central Record. An offer of employment is conditional upon the successful completion of these checks.
- Identity Check: Verification of the applicant's identity using photographic ID.
- Right to Work in the UK: All prospective employees must provide original documentation to verify their right to work in the UK.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks:

An Enhanced DBS Check with a check of the Adults' Barred List will be required for all roles involving regular, unsupervised contact with adult learners (Regulated Activity).

For other roles, an Enhanced or Basic DBS check will be carried out as appropriate to the level of contact with learners.

The level of DBS check required will be clearly stated in the recruitment materials.
- Qualifications and Professional Status: Original certificates for all essential qualifications will be seen and verified.
- Prohibition Checks: Where applicable, a prohibition from teaching check will be undertaken in accordance with current DfE guidance.
- Section 128 Checks: Where required by legislation or regulatory guidance, Section 128 checks will be undertaken for relevant management appointments.
- Adverse Media (Internet) Checks: Open-source internet searches may be undertaken where appropriate and relevant to the role. Any information identified will be reviewed by an appropriately trained manager and considered fairly in accordance with data protection and equality legislation.

- Fitness to Work: Occupational health information will be obtained where appropriate to determine whether any reasonable adjustments are required and whether the individual is able to undertake the essential requirements of the role.

7. Conditional Employment

7.1 SPT will not make an offer of conditional employment unless:

- The level of risk in the intended employment has been evaluated and is deemed to be acceptable and documented.
- Pre-appointment checks (see 6.5) have been completed satisfactorily.

8. Induction and Ongoing Training

8.1 All new staff, regardless of their role, will receive comprehensive safeguarding and Prevent duty training as a mandatory part of their induction.

8.2 This induction will include familiarisation with this policy, the main Safeguarding Policy, the staff Code of Conduct, and procedures for reporting concerns.

8.3 All staff will receive regular updates on safeguarding at least annually.

9. Single Central Record (SCR)

9.1 The organisation will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) in a secure electronic format. The SCR is a live record of all pre-employment and vetting checks carried out on all individuals who work for or on behalf of SPT. The SCR will be maintained by HR and will be regularly audited by the DSL.

10. Use of Agency and Third-Party Staff

10.1 We will only use agencies and third-party providers who can demonstrate their commitment to safer recruitment. We will obtain written confirmation from the agency that all required checks, including the appropriate DBS check, have been completed for any individual they supply to us. We will also verify the identity of the individual upon their arrival.

11. Records

11.1 Recruitment records relating to unsuccessful applicants will be retained for 12 months before being securely destroyed.

11.2 SCR records will be maintained in accordance with organisational record retention arrangements and data protection requirements.

12. Policy Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if there are significant changes in legislation, working practices, or following any related incidents.