

Oarsome Chance

Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures



Policy approved:	September 2024	Board Of Trustees
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Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to define Oarsome Chance's strategic approach to recruitment and selection activity and to establish a consistent framework for the application of these activities.

The board of trustees recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor in recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

Oarsome Chance is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection activities are undertaken in a fair and transparent way and that appointments are based on the candidate judged to be most suitable.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Attract and appoint the highest calibre of applicants.
- Ensure safe and equitable recruitment and selection is conducted at all times.
- Deter, identify and reject prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people.

3. Legal context

The board of trustees recognises that recruitment and selection is governed by many statutory provisions and is committed to ensuring that all legislative requirements are met in the application of this policy.

4. Delegation of Authority

In respect of the position of the CEO, the responsibility and authority to appoint lies with the board of trustees. Where such recruitment activity is required, the board of trustees will convene a recruitment and selection panel. Where a panel of trustees is convened, the board of trustees will ensure members of the panel have knowledge and understanding of the organisation's needs, the appropriate experience and training in recruitment and selection, including safer recruitment training, as well as the confidence in carrying out the process effectively.

In respect of all other posts the board of trustees has delegated responsibility and authority to appoint to the CEO.

5. Equal Opportunities

Oarsome Chance is committed to providing equality of opportunity at all stages of the recruitment and selection process and ensuring that candidates are treated fairly and lawfully throughout the process.

Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation or trade union membership.

Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.

6. Planning for recruitment

Prior to undertaking recruitment activity for vacancies, we ensure that there is a review of the job description and person specification and ensure that this document is an accurate reflection of the role to be filled.

The board of trustees and/or CEO will make a determination as to whether a role is to be filled on a permanent, fixed-term, temporary or any other basis.

7. Advertising vacancies

It will be normal practice for all vacancies to be advertised unless there is a good reason not to do so. Advertisement may be either internally (for example on noticeboards or on the website) or externally (such as via jobs websites e.g. Indeed), depending on the type of vacancy, the nature of the contract which exists and the current nature of the recruitment market. When advertising externally, we will ensure that staff are aware, to allow current members of staff to apply, should they wish to do so.

Advertisements will include a safeguarding statement, highlighting Oarsome Chance's commitment to child safeguarding in an effort to deter any unsuitable candidates, an equal opportunities statement and a statement regarding the declaration of convictions, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended), along with the necessary information needed to attract suitable candidates to the post and to the organisation.

8. Shortlisting and selection processes

The board of trustees recognises that it is a legislative requirement at least one member of a selection panel must have completed safer recruitment training. A selection panel will not be convened without at least one panel member having been appropriately trained in safer recruitment.

For the position of CEO, the selection panel will consist of a minimum of three trustees. For all other posts the panel will normally consist of at least two senior members of staff.

The shortlisting and interview panels will normally be made up of the same members of staff to ensure consistency and fairness.

During the shortlisting process all applications will be assessed equally against the same criteria, without exception or variation. All applications will be carefully scrutinised, with particular care paid to any gaps in employment; repeated and/or regular/frequent changes in employment; and anomalies or discrepancies in information contained within the form. Any such concerns will be taken up with the candidate at interview and will be satisfactorily resolved before any firm offer of employment is made.

References will be requested prior to interview, to enable the panel to compare the information received against the candidate's application form and their answers at interview, as well as allowing for any discrepancies to be explored at interview. References requested at this stage of the process will exclude requests for health information.

The selection process for shortlisted candidates will, as a minimum, consist of a face-to-face selection interview with an interview panel, with other selection activities determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post.

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that we may carry out these checks as part of our due diligence process.

9. Outcome of selection processes

A selection decision will be made based on a fair and thorough assessment of the skills and abilities demonstrated by all the candidates against the requirements of the person specification/job description during the selection process.

Any offer of employment made to the preferred candidate will be made conditionally, in writing, subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks (in line with section 10).

In CEO recruitment, the selection panel will make a recommendation to the full board of trustees for the appointment of one of the applicants, with the determination of whether to appoint sitting with the full board of trustees and not the selection panel.

For all other appointments, the power to appoint is in accordance with the delegation of authority detailed in section 4. The CEO will report any appointments made under such delegation to the board of trustees.

10. Pre-employment checks

The board of trustee recognises its statutory responsibility to carry out pre-employment checks for all new staff as well as to update the single central record prior to new staff commencing employment.

The recruitment panel will act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of prospective employees based on checks and evidence, which may include the following where appropriate: DBS checks, barred list checks, prohibition checks, right to work and identity checks, together with health declaration, references, application forms, interview information, online background searches and checks of relevant academic and professional qualifications.

The recruitment panel will assess all information gathered from pre-employment checks as the information is received. Any unsatisfactory pre-employment checks may lead to the consideration of withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment. Where consideration is being given to withdrawing an offer on the basis of pre-employment checks, advice will be sought from HR.

The candidate will not normally commence employment until all relevant pre-employment checks have been completed and must not start until at least the candidate's identity and right to work in the UK have been established. In exceptional circumstances, the CEO may determine to allow an individual to commence employment in regulated activity prior to the receipt of a DBS check. In these circumstances, all other checks, including a separate barred list check where appropriate, must have been completed and he or she will not be left to work unsupervised. A risk assessment will also be carried out to determine whether other safeguarding measures may need to be put in place.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside of the UK will be subject to the same pre-employment checks as all other staff. In addition, further appropriate checks, such as an overseas police check, will be made as necessary, in order to sufficiently establish the individual's suitability to be appointed.

11. Offers of employment

Offers made prior to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks must be made on a conditional basis. Conditional offers of employment must only be confirmed once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

The contract of employment will be received by the employee on or before the first day of their employment and therefore pre-employment checks are required to be satisfactorily completed before they begin employment. Where such checks are not completed within this timeframe, and the withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment is being considered, further advice will be sought from HR and guidance followed.

12. Retention of recruitment records

For unsuccessful applicants, all paperwork gathered as part of a recruitment exercise will be kept confidentially and securely in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), for a period of 12 months after the interview date to ensure that if there are any claims raised, we are able to rely on our records to justify its judgment and decision. After this period these records will be confidentially disposed of.

For staff appointed to work at Oarsome Chance, information gathered during the recruitment process will be used to form part of the employee's personnel file and, where applicable, will be mandatorily recorded on Oarsome Chance's single central record.