

The Old Library
Safer Recruitment Policy

The Chair is: Helen Verity

Date of policy development: 1st April 2026

This policy was signed off by the Trustees on: 1st April 2026

The policy will be reviewed on: 1st April 2027

The Volunteer Co-ordinator is: Jo Leighton

1. Purpose of the policy

Safe recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children and young people, as well as adults with needs and care requirements. All organisations which employ staff or volunteers to work with children and young people have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes ensuring that the organisation adopts safe recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable persons from gaining access to children or potentially vulnerable adults.

The following guidance is based on current legislation, guidance and best practice and aims to promote consistent practice.

Throughout this procedure, '**children**' refers to any child under the age of 18 years.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all adults who have contact with children, young people and Adults at Risk through their work whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Working as a volunteer in The Old Library will bring the volunteer into a degree of contact with children and vulnerable adults, but never as a sole worker, and always in a supervised environment. The nature of the service provided means that it does not fall within the definition of a Regulated Activity. This means that it would be inappropriate to request either a Standard or an Enhanced Check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If the scope of work performed by volunteers should change in the future, the requirement for Disclosure and Barring Service checks will require review.

The principles of safe recruitment should also be included in the terms of any contract or service level agreements drawn up between the organisation and contractors or agencies that provide services for, or staff to work with, children and young people. Any service level agreement or contract should contain a safeguarding statement, which makes explicit the standards expected. The agreement should be regularly reviewed.

3. Policy Statement

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

Section 11, Children Act 2004, sets out the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applies to all key local bodies named under Section 11(1) of the Act. One of the key features of these arrangements is ensuring safe recruitment procedures are in place.

Organisations should have a policy statement outlining their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and Adults at Risk, which it is expected ALL staff and volunteers will follow. It should convey that robust recruitment and selection procedures are in place to identify and deter people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuitable for employment and to minimise the possibility of children and young people suffering harm from those in a position of trust.

The relevant policy statements can be found in the Safeguarding Children Policy and the Safeguarding Adults Policy for The Old Library CIO.

4. Elements of Safe Practice

Safer practice in recruitment means giving consideration to safeguarding arrangements at every step of the process.

4.1 Planning and Advertising

It is important to be clear about the mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be stated in the advertisement for the post, in order to prevent unwanted applications. The recruitment process needs to be planned, including who will be involved, responsibilities and timescales.

The advertisement should include a statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and Adults at Risk.

4.2 Job Description

Once a post becomes vacant or a new post is created the job description and person specification need to be reviewed/agreed to ensure compliance with safe recruitment guidance.

This should clearly state:

- The main duties of the post
- The extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people;
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children / young people /Adults at Risk they are responsible for, or will come into contact with.

4.3 Person Specification

This should include:

- The essential and desirable qualifications and experience;
- Other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people;
- The competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate.

4.4 Information Pack for Candidates

All information given to interested applicants should highlight the importance of the rigorous selection processes and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It should be clear that proof of identity will be required.

The pack should include a copy of:

- The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form;
- A Self-disclosure Form requesting declaration of any unspent convictions or cautions and any previous disciplinary action taken against them;
- The job description and person specification;
- Relevant information about the organisation and the recruitment process;
- The organisation's Safeguarding Policy for both adults at risk and children;
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

4.5 Application Form

Employers should use an application form to obtain a common set of core data. It is not good practice to accept a curriculum vitae in place of an application form because this will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. The applicant form/information pack should refer to the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children. It should obtain:

- Identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, current address and National Insurance Number;
- To comply with the Equality Act 2010, The Old Library will adopt a practice that the **date of birth** should not be included on the main application form, but added to a diversity monitoring form, which can be retained by HR/Personnel and not made available to those involved in the short-listing process. The Old Library will not

accept volunteers under the age of 16 years: this needs to be stated in recruitment material. Applicants under the age of 18 years will need to have written parental agreement included within their application;

- A full employment history, for the past ten years, which might include retirement, in chronological order. Include periods of post-secondary education/training and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment;
- Details of referees. If in employment, or recently employed, one referee should be the applicant's employer/line manager, not a colleague. Normally two referees should be sufficient;
 - Where an applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from that person / organisation in addition to the current or most recent employer;
 - References should not be accepted from relatives or friends.
- A statement of the skills and abilities, and competencies/experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post and how they meet the person specification;
- Information should be requested about any previous - including spent - convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs.

4.6 Scrutinising and Shortlisting

The same selection panel should short list and interview the candidate. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safe recruitment and selection training.

- All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure:
 - They are fully and properly completed;
 - The information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies;
 - Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified;
- Incomplete applications should not be accepted;
- Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment and the reasons for this should be noted, so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant, as well as a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid career move from a permanent to temporary post;
- All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification.

4.7 References

- The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions;
- All volunteers must complete the application form and provide the names of two referees who have known them for at least one year and who are not related to them.
- All referees will be contacted and asked specifically about the volunteer's suitability to work with vulnerable adults and children.
- They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee;
- A copy of the job description and person specification should be included with all requests;
- References or testimonials provided by the candidate, or open references, i.e. To Whom It May Concern should not be accepted. Open references/testimonials may be forged or the result of a 'compromise agreement';
- Note that the Equality Act 2010 places strict limitations on the making of enquiries about a person's health before an offer of employment is made. For further information see '[The Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? A Quick Start Guide to the Ban on Questions about Health and Disability during Recruitment](#)';
- References should seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion. The use of reference proforma can help achieve this.

If an applicant is not currently employed in working with children, but has previously done so, then it is advisable to check with the last relevant employer to confirm details of their employment and reason(s) for leaving.

Requests for references should ask:

- The referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship and how long has the referee known the candidate;
- How they have demonstrated that they meet the person specification;
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job;
- Whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the application has had any allegations made against them or concerns raised, which relate either to the safety and welfare of, or the applicants behaviour towards, children and young people or Adults at Risk. Details about the outcome of any such concern should be sought;

- Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children/young people/Adults at Risk. If not, for details of the referee's concerns and the reason why the person might be unsuitable.

Requests should remind the referee that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and that relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

Requests addressed to a candidate's current employer or a previous employer should also seek:

- Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post;
- Specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct;
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to which relate to the safety and welfare of children or to the applicant's behaviour towards children, young people or Adults at Risk and the outcome;
- Details of any allegations or concerns about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children, young people or Adults at Risk and the outcome of these concerns.

On receipt of references:

- They should be checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily;
- **Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations** should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time should give cause for concern.

4.8 Interviews

- The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification, and explore their suitability to work with children/young people/Adults at Risk;
- The interview should stress that the identity of the successful candidate will be checked;
- All candidates should bring photographic evidence of their identity, such as a current photographic driving licence or a passport, and evidence of current address, such as a financial statement or utility bill less than three months old.
- All candidates will be required to disclose any information on unspent criminal convictions or cautions and any previous disciplinary actions taken against them, that might be relevant to their suitability for the post of Volunteer or Trustee, by completion of a Self-disclosure Form (Appendix A)

- Candidates may bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualification(s), if they wish to demonstrate any particular skills they could bring to their role as Volunteer.
- A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file.

4.9 Interview Panel

A panel of at least two people is recommended, allowing one member to observe and assess the candidate and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. One member of the panel should be trained in safe recruitment practice.

The members of the panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about the appointment;
- Meet before the interview to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification and to prepare a list of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post;
- Identify any issues they wish to explore with each candidate based on the information provided in their application form and in the references;
- Notes of the applicant's interview answers should be collated by chair of the panel and stored in their personnel file.

4.10 Scope of the Interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the post, the panel should explore:

- The candidate's attitude towards children/young people/Adults at Risk;
- Their ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history;
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee;

The interview should also explore issues relating to safeguarding, including:

- Motivation to work with children/ young people/Adults at Risk;
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries;

4.11 Conditional Offer of Appointment

Pre-Appointment Checks and References

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be conditional upon:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory written references, where possible confirmed by telephone;
- Verification of the candidate's identity;
- Satisfactory completion of the Self-disclosure Form

All checks should be:

- Confirmed in writing;
- Documented and retained on the personal file;
- Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or where there are discrepancies in the information provided.
- Kept secure;
- Destroyed as soon as no longer required (not normally longer than 6 months after decision to appoint)

4.12 Employment of ex-offenders

Employers must make a judgement about suitability, taking into account only those offences which may be relevant to the post in question. In deciding the relevance the following should be considered:

- The nature of the appointment;
- The nature of the offence;
- The age at which the offence took place;
- The frequency of the offence.

The Old Library ensures that all those in The Old Library who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences

The Old Library also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

At interview, or in a separate discussion, The Old Library ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might

be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment

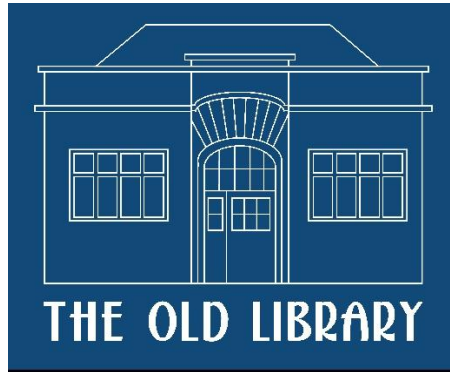
4.13 Staff Records

In relation to each member of staff appointed a record should be kept to show:

- Written references obtained and confirmed by telephone;
- Gaps in employment history checked;
- Reasons/decision to appoint despite criminal convictions (i.e. a Risk Assessment);
- Evidence of proof of identity;
- Evidence of qualifications;
- Details of registration with any appropriate professional body;
- Record of interview questions and answers.

Records should be signed and dated by appointing chair of the interview panel.

Appendix A



**Self-disclosure form for volunteers and trustees
of The Old Library CIO**

CONFIDENTIAL

You are being asked to complete this form because the role you are applying for is covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in England, Scotland and Wales or the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, but can involve contact with children, young people and Adults at Risk.

All information you provide will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and guidance. You have a legal right to access any information held about you.

Name:

Previous name(s):

Address with postcode:

Telephone/mobile number:

Date of birth:

Criminal record declaration

This role is covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in England, Scotland and Wales, or the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. You are therefore only required to declare unspent conditional cautions or convictions.

Do you have any unspent conditional cautions or convictions in the UK or overseas? YES NO

[Find out more about unspent convictions from the criminal justice charity Nacro](#)

If yes, please provide further information:

Conduct declaration

Have you ever been known to any children’s services department or police as being a risk or potential risk to children? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been dismissed for misconduct from any paid or voluntary position held by you? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been under investigation for, or subject to, any disciplinary sanctions in relation to your conduct at the time of your employment? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been subject to any sanctions being placed on your professional registration, by a regulatory or licencing body in any country? Yes No N/A

Sanctions may include: warnings, conditions, limitations, suspensions, removal, or any other restrictions that may have applied to your professional registration?

If yes, please provide further information:

Confirmation of declaration (tick box below)

I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment may be withdrawn or disciplinary action may be taken if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently come to the organisation's attention.

In accordance with the organisation's procedures if required I agree to provide a valid criminal record certificate and consent to the organisation clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.

I agree to inform the organisation within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children or young people.

I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the criminal record check and information supplied by third parties may be supplied by the organisation to other persons or organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard children.

By signing below, I confirm that the information I have provided on this form (or attached) is accurate. I understand that this information will not necessarily prevent me from being employed or appointed in the role above, and that I will be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns you might have before you make a final decision on my suitability for the role.

Signature of candidate

Print name

Date