**The Wheels Project Ltd**



**31 & 32 Bonville Road**

**Brislington**

**BRISTOL BS4 5QH**

*Registered Charity No: 1081236*

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| **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES** |

**Staff/Volunteer Recruitment**

1. **Introduction**
	1. This policy provides a consistent approach to recruitment and selection, enabling The Wheels Project to recruit the right individuals – utilising the right mechanisms and processes to recruit safely, and at the same time deterring those who may be unsuitable to work with children or young people.
	2. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people in our care. The Wheels Project expects all staff and volunteers to uphold and share this commitment.
	3. We will ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.
	4. This policy is in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 3: Safer Recruitment](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf).
2. **Scope**
	1. This policy applies to the recruitment of both permanent and temporary roles within the organisation. These principles of safer recruitment will also be followed when appointing and vetting volunteers to ensure their suitability for working with children.
3. **Statutory requirements**
	1. We adhere to all statutory requirements as set out in the [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf) document.
	2. Statutory requirements also fall under sections 175 of the Education Act 2002.
4. **Preparing to recruit**
	1. The General Manager and other member of staff and/or the Board of Trustees at the Wheels Project involved in the recruitment and selection of staff is responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.
	2. The job description and person specification are essential tools in the recruitment and selection process. These documents will be reviewed before initiating any recruitment activity, with particular attention to safeguarding. They will specify the level of contact with children, the post holder’s responsibility for promoting and safeguarding children, referring to an enhanced DBS check being conducted.
	3. The recruitment timetable will be confirmed in advance to allow sufficient time for the process, including the completion of pre-employment checks before the candidate begins their role.
5. **Advertising**
	1. Any advert will include a statement about The Wheels Project’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our young people, and again will refer to the successful candidate undertaking an enhanced DBS check which is a requirement of all staff who are at the Project.. A link to/a copy of the Wheels Project’s Safeguarding Policy will also be included on the advert, including this Safer Recruitment Policy.
6. **The Application Process**
	1. All applicants whether applying directly to The Wheels Project or via a recruitment consultant will be expected to provide a CV and/or covering letter with suitability for the role for which they are applying.
	2. Their CV should include personal details such as current and former names, and current address.
	3. Details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving.
	4. Full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment/education.
	5. Qualifications, the awarding body and date of award.
	6. Details of two referees (one referee should be the applicants current or most recent employer/line manager (not a friend).
	7. A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.
	8. The application form will also make it clear that an online check will be undertaken should they be shortlisted.
7. **Shortlisting Process**
	1. Once a short list has been drawn up, the General Manager will consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them.
	2. Explore all potential concerns.
	3. The criteria to be used in assessing the applications at this stage will be based on the person specification, to ensure consistency for all candidates.
	4. The shortlisting assessment will be documented to ensure that there is a record should there be a challenge from any candidate. These records, along with the application form will be held for a period of six months before being destroyed (excluding that for the appointed candidate).
	5. In addition, applications will be reviewed to ensure there are no discrepancies, to enable identification of any gaps in employment history or education, or repeated changes of employment in short periods of time. For those that are still shortlisted these queries will be documented in preparation for questioning the candidate at interview.
8. **Preparation for Interview**
	1. All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete the self-disclosure form prior to any interview. The purpose of self-declaration is to enable candidates to have the opportunity to share relevant information prior to the interview and allow this to be discussed during the interview. This will not take away the requirement to apply for an enhanced DBS check should a conditional offer of employment be made. This form will include questions related to the following:-
	* Cautions and convictions (where these are not protected offences).
	* Whether they are on the Children’s Barred List.
	* Prohibition from Teaching.
	* Overseas information.
	* Childcare Disqualification.
	1. Online checks. This will usually be undertaken by the Office Manager, who is safer recruitment trained.
	2. This will be a check of the full name (including any previous surnames) via an internet search, this will not be a social media search.
	3. Should any concerning information be found via this search the person undertaking the check will share this information with the General Manager, only if this is relevant to their suitability to work with children.
	4. A record that this check has been undertaken and any action that was taken as a result will be referenced on the employee file should they be appointed. This information would be discussed with the candidate at interview and any response recorded as part of the recruitment process.
9. **References**
	1. At least two references will be obtained prior to interview, where authority has been given by the candidate.
	2. One of these references should be from the current or most recent employer
	3. References will be requested directly from the referee. We will not accept open references i.e. ‘to whom it may concern’.
	4. Standard reference proforma’s will be used when requesting references to ensure consistency. This will ask the referee if they are satisfied with the applicant’s suitability to work with children and provide facts regarding any substantiated safeguarding allegations.
	5. References will be followed up and verified by The Wheels Project to ensure they are legitimate and from the said source, usually via a phone call.
	6. References will be scrutinised to ensure the content is accurate (as per the application form) and that there are no anomalies.
	7. Previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies.
	8. Any anomalies or discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate either at interview or prior to any appointment is confirmed.
10. **Selection Process**
	1. We will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post but will always include an interview as part of the process. Child regulated activity roles will involve an activity or whole class teaching, depending on the role.
	2. Questions will be based on the job description and person specification and will be structured and agreed in advance prior to the interview.
	3. The General Manager will identify and agree any issues they wish to explore with the candidates based on their application form, self-disclosure form and references.
	4. Questions will include the following themes:
		1. what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
		2. exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role;
		3. asking for explanations for any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment frequently.
		4. candidates will be asked to discuss the content of their self-disclosure form if there is any information contained within it. The disclosure of a conviction/offence will not automatically debar a candidate from being appointable.
		5. all interview notes will be clearly recorded in written format, along with the decisions made. Candidates can subsequently ask for feedback and for a copy of their interview notes. The information for those candidates who are not appointed will be held securely for a period of 6 months before being destroyed.
		6. candidates will be asked for a wet signature on their application form.
11. **Offer of Employment**
	1. All offers of employment will be made on a conditional ‘preferred candidate’ basis until The Wheels Project have completed all pre-employment checks.
12. **Pre-Employment Checks**

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken prior to confirming a final offer of employment;

* + Identity Check. (Being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate.
	+ Two references, including one from their most recent/current employer
	+ An online check has been undertaken.
	+ DBS check at enhanced level including a check on the children's barred list if the individual is going to be working in regulated activity with children.
	+ Occupational Health clearance, particularly for those in teaching posts to confirm Fitness to Teach.
	+ Evidence of the individual’s right to work in the UK.
	+ Verification of professional qualifications
	+ A section 128 check for the following members of the Senior Leadership Team
	+ If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks The Wheels Project considers appropriate.
	+ Overseas checks – this applies to candidates who have worked overseas for 12 months or more in the past 10 years and this is their first role in an education setting in England. They will require a certificate of good conduct from the country or countries they have resided in.
1. **DBS Checks**
	1. We do not currently expect our staff to register with the DBS update service, however we will accept checks via the update service for potential new staff with their consent. We will need to see a copy of the original DBS certificate before we can process this check via the Update service.
	2. A paper copy of the DBS certificate will need to be seen by us before any final offer of employment can be made.
	3. The Wheels Project’s policy is to undertake new enhanced DBS checks every two years.
	4. No new member of staff will start at The Wheels Project without their DBS Certificate having been received.
2. **Dealing with convictions**
	1. We have a formal vetting process for dealing with matters that are outlined on the DBS certificate. Depending on the severity of this information, an initial assessment will be made to determine whether or not they are low, medium or high risk and whether the case needs to be considered by the Senior Leadership Team/Board of Trustees.
3. **Single Central Record**
	1. We maintain a single central record of all pre-employment checks for **all** staff. This will be audited twice a year as a minimum basis by the DSL/Trustee DSL for Safeguarding.
	2. The SCR is password protected.
4. **Induction**
	1. All staff, who are new to The Wheels Project will receive induction training that will cover safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices as well as the Employee Code of Conduct. They will also be required to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 Part 1 and the role of a DSL. Senior leaders are expected to read the whole document.