

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY



THE ARTHUR ELLIS
MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION



Purpose

AEMHF as an organisation is committed to employing the best staff to undertake direct work with clients. We want all staff to exemplify the ethos and values of AEMHF. We do this by being very clear about our commitment to safeguarding from the development of job descriptions through to the completion of probation periods and beyond. Our role is to make it as difficult as possible for people who have the wrong motivations to work with vulnerable groups, to be able to access them through AEMHF.

AEMHF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This statement and ethos are included in:

- Any publicity materials.
- Job advertisements.
- Candidate information packs/Induction packs.
- Induction training programmes.
- Probationary Periods.
- Training & CPD.
- Ongoing Vigilance.

Scope

This policy covers all prospective and existing staff and volunteers who work or volunteer under the AEMHF banner.

Procedures

Our recruitment process follows several stages to ensure it is carried out in the safest possible way.

The process is thorough and a member of staff with Accredited Safer Recruitment training is involved from start to finish.

Once a decision is made to recruit a new member of staff, trainee or volunteer, we will agree a timeline including all stages of recruitment. We give sufficient time to ensure that the process is being followed fully.

REVIEW

Written: January 2025

Adapted: September 2026

For review: September 2029

Updated on Website: September 2026



Job Descriptions

When creating our job description and person specifications we will ensure it will clearly describe the role, responsibilities, accountabilities, knowledge, skills and experience required for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is built into all job descriptions, Codes of Practice, contracts of employment and disciplinary procedures. This covers those who work directly with children and vulnerable adults and those who do not work directly with clients (administrations and trustees). This shows that safeguarding is a priority in AEMHF.

The person specification will explain how the applicant will be tested on our requirements as part of the interviewing process. For example: 'In addition to candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post well, we will also explore issues to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, e.g. motivation to work with children, vulnerable adults and emotional resilience to working with children and vulnerable adults with challenging behaviour.

Candidate Information Pack

Candidate information pack

Our candidate information pack will be available in electronic form (or paper by request) and will include:

- The application form and guidance notes on how to complete the form.
- The job description and person specification.
- Our child protection and adult safeguarding policy and statement.
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.
- Relevant information about AEMHF and the recruitment process.
- Information and links to our policies online.
- Information about the checks that will be made and that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and that they will be required to disclose any criminal convictions or cautions that are not protected, this must include a link to the Government guidance.
- Information on checks that will be sought.
- Information on online searches to be undertaken if shortlisted.

REVIEW

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Adapted: September 2026

For review: September 2029

Updated on Website: September 2026



Advertise

Once the pack has been put together, we are able to advertise the position. The advert will include a statement about our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It will also advise that the successful applicant will require an Enhanced Disclosure or an Enhanced Disclosure with a Barred List check and the need for a criminal disclosure.

They will also be notified that an online search is undertaken on all applicants called for interview.

It will also include information such as details of the post advertised, salary, qualifications required, experience, hours etc. This will give the candidates the opportunity to make an informed decision about whether or not they should apply for the position.

It will inform them that CV are not accepted, and the application form must be completed fully.

Application Form

We always ensure we have any applicant fill out our application form. This allows us to obtain core data. We do not accept a letter of application or curriculum vitae or recommendation alone, this is to ensure that the applicant doesn't just present information only they wish to do so and therefore may omit relevant details.

Our application form includes details such as name, date of birth, current address and national insurance number. It also explains that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, all convictions, cautions or reprimands including those as 'spent' or 'pending' must be declared unless they are protected or filtered.

Within our application there is a statement that outlines that the applicant should not be disqualified from working with children or adults or if they are subject to any sanctions imposed by a regulating body such as the Health and Care Professions Council, BACP etc. The applicant must sign against this to agree they are still suitable to apply for the post.

There is also a section included on the application form that includes a question stating if there are any outstanding complaints or investigations against the candidate which in the future may bring the organisation into disrepute.

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Scrutinising and Shortlisting

Once the application forms have been filled in and returned, they are scrutinised to ensure they have been fully completed and any information received could be classed as inappropriate is flagged up. We also check to ensure the information provided is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies, and if we are able to identify any gaps in the employment history or if there is any other issues that may cause concern. Such as, frequent changes in the applicant's employment that do not show any clear career or salary progression, a move from a higher paid permanent employment to temporary or supply work.

If there any areas of concern this should be explored, discussed and verified with the candidate at the interviewing process.

Only information provided on the application form is considered at this stage and offers to interview can be sent out with a request to bring their criminal disclosure form, qualifications, identity documents and further paperwork to interview.

References

We feel references are a very important part of the safer recruitment process. Their purpose will be to obtain objective and factual information about the applicant that will support the recruitment process.

The application form should seek permission to ask for references at short listing stage, if the candidate does not give permission, references can only be sought if they are conditionally offered the post.

They will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. If we receive a reference from a referee and all our questions have not been answered or it is vague or unspecific, then we will contact the referee directly and request further written information or answers to be provided. We will not accept any references provided by the applicant, or open references or testimonials, i.e. 'To Whom it May Concern'.

Any reference must include information about any outstanding complaints or investigations against the candidate which might in the future bring our setting into disrepute.

If a candidate is not currently working with children or vulnerable adults but has done in the past– a reference must be sought from their former employer. Refusal or any signs of reluctance by an applicant for a former employer to be contacted will be explored further.

For any applicant that has not previously worked with children or vulnerable adults, we will consider obtaining a reference from a voluntary organisation they have worked for or from someone in authority such as a lecturer.

If they have no work history, personal references can be sought but must be backed up with a risk assessment.

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Interviewing

When interviewing for an applicant takes places, we will ensure that at least one of the members of the interview panel are knowledgeable and experienced in safeguarding issues and have completed accredited safer recruitment training (that will be updated every 3 years). All interview panels will receive guidance on recruitment and selection.

When creating the selection process, we will ensure questions relating to safeguarding issues are included. We will also take this opportunity to question the applicant about any gaps in their employment and probe any areas that may have caused concern or have not been answered fully in the previous stages on the safer recruitment process. Criminal Disclosure questions can also be asked at this point and any concerns that have been raised from the online search. Other activities may also be undertaken.

We will only offer the employment to the applicant if all the relevant pre-employment checks being made before they take up the position are completed and satisfactory with our safer recruitment policy e.g. right to work, references, fit to work, qualifications, employment history, overseas checks, relevant DBS check.

All documentation is also checked at this point.

Applicants must bring in a full birth certificate and any documents that show a change of name – marriage certificate, divorce decree, change of name deed. All these need to be included and checked on the DBS.

A barred list check is done for all paid staff and volunteers who are regularly having contact with children or vulnerable adults.

People who have worked abroad for more than 6 months in the last ten years must have an overseas check done for the relevant country.

[1] 'Interviewing' incorporates the use of an assessment style interviewing that assesses applicants' suitability.

Offering Employment

Employment can be offered conditionally on the return of references and satisfactory checks.

The decision-making paperwork must be kept for 6 months, allowing unsuccessful candidates the opportunity to ask for feedback or challenge the decision.

All references and checks must be satisfactory and received before the new member of staff can start.

A barred list check is done for all paid staff and volunteers who are regularly having contact with children or vulnerable adults.

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Induction

If the post is accepted, plans for induction should be implemented. Safeguarding training must be included as part of the induction process.

We provide an induction for all staff and volunteers in order to fully brief them about AEMHF, the clients we serve, our policies and procedures, ethos and daily practice.

We have a written induction plan for all new staff, which includes the following:

- Introductions to all staff and volunteers.
- Familiarisation with the building, online sessions protocols, health and safety, and fire and evacuation procedures.
- Ensuring our policies and procedures are read and adhered to.
- Familiarisation with confidential information in relation to any key clients.
- Details of the tasks and daily routines to be completed.
- Introduction to safeguarding arrangements and systems to be used.
- Requirements for recording information.
- A training plan and timeline.

The induction period lasts for 3 months with regular check ins. The manager inducts new staff and volunteers. During the induction period, the individual must demonstrate understanding of and compliance with policies, procedures, tasks and routines.

Successful completion of the induction forms part of the probationary period.

Following induction, we continue to support our staff to deliver high quality performance through regular supervision and appraisal of their work.

Probation

This applies to salaried staff only.

Employment can be made permanent after the completion of a successful probation period.

The probation period can be extended and the opportunity to address any poor practice must be given

Either party can decide to end employment during the probation period.

Volunteers – we have the right to stop using a volunteer immediately if their conduct does not meet AEMHF principles.

To ensure all of the stages outlined in this policy are adhered to and followed correctly, we use a safer recruitment checklist. This is our tool to ensure this policy is always adhered to at all times. See Appendix 1

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Adapted: September 2026

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Updated on Website: September 2026



Annual Declaration

All staff will be asked to complete an annual declaration. The annual declaration should be signed and dated and confirm the following:

- They have not been convicted or cautioned of any criminal offence that may impact on their ability to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- There are no outstanding investigations by police.
- They have not been investigated or had children removed by Children Social Care.
- There are no personal circumstances which may impact on their ability to perform their role.
- Details of any paid or voluntary work they are undertaking including the name of the organisation, nature of work and contact name and details of organisation.

Monitoring and Reviewing

AEMHF will monitor and review this policy to make sure the aims of the policy are being achieved. This will be undertaken annually by the CEO.

Staff are encouraged to feedback any observations and comments.

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless:

- Changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or adults at risk.
- Significant changes within AEMHF.
- Following recommendations about an incident or near miss.

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Appendix 1

POST TITLE:		
PRE-INTERVIEW	Comments	Initials & Date
Planning: Timetable, job description and person specification prepared.		
Timeline agreed: Dates agreed for each stage of the process.		
Interview Panel Agreed: At least two interviewers appropriately trained and with the necessary authority.		
Vacancy Advertised: (reference safeguarding policy, criminal disclosure, online scrutiny requirements and DBS and other checks requirements).		
SHORTLISTING		
Applications: scrutinised and discrepancies/anomalies/gaps in employment noted to explore with candidates if shortlisted. Standard questions and specific questions for candidates agreed. Criminal disclosure form sent.		
Shortlist Prepared:		
Online check done.		
Invitations to Interview sent:		
Interview panel trained,		

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REFERENCES		
References sought from shortlisted candidates: Two written references, one from the current or most recent employer. Candidates' permission should be sought to apply for references before interview, if they do not give permission, they must be requested after the interview.		
References received: checked against information on application; any discrepancy/issue of concern noted to take up with applicant at interview.		
INTERVIEW		
Interview Date: Explores applicant's suitability for post NB: Identity documents, Right to Work, Asylum and Immigration/DBS documentation and qualifications of applicants copied and verified on day of interview.		
Criminal disclosure and online search information to be explored with the candidate at interview.		
Tasks or activity undertaken		
SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE(S):		

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PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS Offer of appointment is made conditional on satisfactory completion of the following pre-appointment checks and, for support staff posts, a probationary period:		
Enhanced DBS check.		
Overseas check.		
Health Clearance.		
Children's/Adults Barred list check for any workers or volunteers		
Risk assessment completed (for any criminal disclosure, if any checks not back by start date or if there are no professional references).		
RIGHT TO WORK originals seen		
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-workchecklist		
Birth certificate change of name docs seen.		
Photographic ID original seen.		
QUALIFICATIONS original seen.		
Qualification check with the awarding body.		
Induction booked.		
Training required.		

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CHARITY NUMBER 1207350



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