

APPRENTICE & SKILLS EDUCATIONAL STAFF SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Make UK Apprentice & Skills complies with the procedures and regulations relating to Safer Recruitment in Education and any other relevant legislative requirements.

2 AIMS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Make UK Apprentice & Skills recruits and appoints staff safely and in line with statutory requirements, including the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and DBS regulations. Safer recruitment ensures candidates are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults while promoting equality of opportunity.

3 INTRODUCTION

Safer Recruitment ensures that the right candidates are recruited for roles involving children and vulnerable adults. It covers verifying information on applications, conducting background checks, and ensuring candidates demonstrate suitable values, behaviours, and safeguarding awareness. This process underpins Make UK's commitment to providing a safe learning environment and complying with statutory guidance.

Safer Recruitment is about more than obtaining a satisfactory criminal record check. It is about attracting the right candidate for the post and ensuring that the information a candidate has given on their application form is consistent, can be verified and is accurate.

Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance provides the legal requirements that governing bodies and proprietors need to understand when appointing individuals to engage in regulated activity relating to children. It covers the importance of ensuring the correct reappointment checks are carried out with the aim of helping to identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher.

Having safer recruitment practices in place can also help to assess whether the candidate has the right attitudes, values and behaviours to work with young people, as well as ensuring potential applicants are given the right messages about Make UK's commitment to recruit suitable people.

Safer Recruitment is embedded into the Make UK recruitment process to ensure the following:

- Learners are able to learn and in a safe environment
- Statutory responsibilities are adhered to
- Appropriate staff are appointed for the job they do
- Recruited staff and volunteers are the best in their field.

This policy describes in detail the recruitment processes and the checks which are in place to help deter, reject or identify people who are unsuitable to work within our learning environment.

Our Safer Recruitment practices cover:

Training to ensure that all managers involved in the recruitment process are aware of their responsibilities with regards to safer recruitment practices

- Information available to candidates to help deter those that are unsuitable from applying and to ensure those that are successfully appointed are clear on the culture of safeguarding and its importance within Make UK
- Safer Recruitment Checks – References, DBS, Criminal record check of overseas applicants (if applicable), Prohibition Checks and Right to Work in the UK.

4 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT TRAINING

Safeguarding Induction and Refresher Training

In line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, all staff undergo mandatory safeguarding training at induction, which includes online safety. All staff update their Level 2 by undertaking refresher training every two years.

The completion of safeguarding training is recorded via our online training system.

To ensure that all new staff members are aware of systems within Make UK, which support safeguarding, all new starters receive the following information, in addition to safeguarding induction training:

- Safeguarding Policy (reference to where it can be found online)
- A copy of the Staff Code of Conduct
- A copy of the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance (Part One).

This safer recruitment policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Safer Recruitment Training

It is a mandatory requirement that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. Any manager chairing an interview must have completed Safer Recruitment Training before they are authorised to chair an interview.

Prevent Training

All new starters complete Prevent training. A link to this training is emailed to all new starters and it is expected that all new starters complete within their first month of employment.

Staff are required to undertake a refresher course in Prevent training every year.

5. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CANDIDATES

As well as providing information to applicants regarding the role and the recruitment process, it is also important to remember that information provided to applicants is a key tool in ensuring a safer recruitment process. Information available to potential applicants can ensure that the right message is sent out with regards to the Safeguarding culture within the organisation.

It is important to include background information on the organisation as this provides an insight into the needs of Make UK and provides an opportunity to highlight specific characteristics of the organisation that candidates need to be aware of e.g., beliefs, behaviours and aspects of diversity and safeguarding culture. Providing such information, supplies suitable applicants with a clear image of the Make UK. A variety of information to show our commitment to safeguarding is therefore provided for candidates throughout the recruitment process.

The Advert

Information provided to applicants (as part of the job advert) explains the checks that are in place as part of the Make UK recruitment process (such as a DBS check)

The advert should state *all applicants are subject to DBS*

The Job Description and Person Specification

As safeguarding is a responsibility shared by everyone, it is important that this is reflected within job descriptions and any related person specification documents.

When a vacancy is first identified – whether a new or existing post – the first priority is to review the job description and person specification to ensure they accurately describe the role and attributes required. This should include reference to expectations in respect of safeguarding.

A safeguarding related statement should be included within all Make UK job descriptions:

To be responsible for the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults wherever applicable within the role.

Reference to safeguarding must also be made in relation to the person specification, as a minimum the following statement should be included within the person specification,

'Responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults wherever applicable.'

Acceptance of CVs

Make UK only fully considers shortlisted candidate's applications if a curriculum vitae (CV) is considered alongside an agency registration form. A CV on its own (before an Offer of appointment is made) will not provide adequate information. The registration form also ensures that applicants provide details of references and a complete employment history, as well as asking candidates to declare any convictions and consent to a DBS check. if successfully appointed.

6 SHORTLISTING

Once panel members have completed their shortlisting, against the person specification criteria and in line with the Make UK Recruitment and Selection Practice. Panel members should then ensure that they scrutinise all shortlisted candidates' applications carefully. The shortlisting panel will consist of at least two people, where possible it will be the same people whose responsibility it will be to carry out the interview for a consistent approach.

When scrutinising, panel members should be vigilant in identifying:

- Any inconsistencies
- A completed Agency Registration Forms is provided
- Any gaps in the applicant's employment history or other information that need to be explored further at interview such as reasons for leaving where this is not disclosed or states 'other'.

The Chair should also complete the declaration on the shortlisting paperwork stating that they have checked for gaps in employment and reasons for leaving previous employment. Any discrepancies will be explored with candidates as part of the interview process.

Online Searches

STR (Make UK's chosen recruitment supplier) will manage the Agency Registration Form Process (see attached), This will inform candidates that they will conduct general online searches for all

shortlisted candidates. This may include social media accounts in accordance with due diligence checks.

The Department of Education '**Keeping children safe in education - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges** states that:

“Schools and colleges should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence check.

If hiring manager(s) choose to do this then they must be consistent and apply the same approach for all shortlisted candidates of a single particular vacancy. The DoE advice goes on to say:

If they identify “any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online” they will then need to “explore with the applicant at interview”

Any incidences that are taken into account (record kept) will need to be documented by the hiring manager(s) otherwise they may receive claims from a shortlisted candidate that have been rejected for unfounded reasons or allegations. In the case of rejection, a shortlisted candidate will want to know that this approach has been taken with all others applying for the vacancy otherwise they may allege some form of discrimination*

*** The approach as outlined above are mandatory requirements**

Candidates that have Declared Convictions

Panel members should be aware that it is discriminatory to use disclosed information for the purposes of shortlisting. Criminal background self-disclosures should not be considered by the short-listing panel until the short list has been agreed and self-disclosures should therefore only be considered for short listed candidates.

Once the final shortlist has been agreed, the application forms of the shortlisted candidates must be checked for details of any unspent criminal convictions under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

If the post is exempt from the Act all previous convictions, whether spent or unspent, must be considered. The disclosure of any spent or unspent convictions does not automatically exclude the candidate from the selection process.

Panel members must bear in mind the need to maintain the confidentiality of any information disclosed by applicants concerning previous convictions.

Panel members must consult with the Compliance Manager and HR Services before making any decisions regarding the withdrawal or otherwise of a particular candidate that has declared convictions on their application form, from the selection process. In the event that the panel members and HR decide that they are unable to proceed with a candidate's application, the reason for not shortlisting should be noted on the shortlisting form.

If the candidate concerned requests feedback as to why they weren't shortlisted, the Chair of the Panel should advise them accordingly. The candidate should be assured that the information they provided has been treated with confidence and used only in connection with this application and does not bar them from obtaining other employment within Make UK.

7 INTERVIEW PROCESSES

Exploring Gaps in Employment

Panel members should agree what additional questions the Chair of the Panel needs to ask of the candidate at interview, in respect of any gaps in employment.

Panel members should note down any responses that the candidate provides in relation to gaps within their employment history.

The Chair of the Panel should complete the declaration at the end of each interview question form to confirm that they have explored gaps in employment and are satisfied with the response provided by the candidate.

DBS checks are completed before confirmation of appointment.

Exploring Referees

Candidates should be expected to nominate their current employer as their first referee in order to secure the most recent information about the candidate's employment history, work performance and suitability for the post that is being recruited to.

If the candidate hasn't nominated their most recent or current employer as their referee, the HR Manager should carefully explore with the candidate reasons for this, making it very clear that it may not be possible to proceed with an appointment without an opportunity to check the candidate's suitability for the role with their most recent employer.

Candidates may request that the HR Manager delays requesting a reference from a current employer until a decision about making a conditional offer of employment has been made, in order to avoid any prospective repercussions of seeking alternative employment in the event that the candidate is unsuccessful in their application. HR Managers should be sensitive to such requests but should make it clear to candidates that references will be sought in due course and that it may be necessary to call them back for a further discussion about any issues arising from references before an offer of employment can be confirmed.

Exploring Declared Convictions

If panel members decide to shortlist a candidate that has declared convictions on their application form, then at interview, Make UK will ensure 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, for example if further details are revealed following the return of a DBS check, then this could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Panel members should agree what additional questions need to be asked of the candidate at interview in respect of information in their self-disclosure.

See DBS policy for further guidance.

Verifying a Candidates Identity

All candidate's identity must be verified. Candidates must provide original photographic ID, which will be verified before they are made permanent.

8 PRE-EMPLOYMENT RECRUITMENT CHECKS

Any offer of permanent employment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. As part of the Make UK recruitment process, and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, the following checks are completed:

Verify a candidate's identity

- Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (including Child and/or Adult barred list information when applicable to the role)
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role
- Verify the person's right to work in the UK
- If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks that Make UK consider appropriate
- Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

References

In addition, the following checks must be undertaken as part of the recruitment process:
Obtain satisfactory references from the candidate's most recent employer

Following the acceptance of an offer of appointment HR Services will take up references. All offers of employment will be subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

Under Data Protection legislation individuals are not entitled to have access to any reference given by the provider of the reference if it is given for the purposes of education, training or employment. However, the individual will be able to apply to a new employer, or potential employer, for a copy.

The employee can ask their new employer for a copy of the reference, but this is limited in that it does not allow the employee to automatically see a copy. It can however be disclosed to the employee if the former employer consents or it is reasonable to disclose without consent.

The reference for the successful candidate is retained on the new employee's HR personal file and the DBS is recorded on the A&S Single Central Record.

References which are deemed unsatisfactory and ultimately result in a withdrawal of employment are to be held by HR Services Unit for six months, in order to successfully defend Employment Tribunal claims should they arise.

In circumstances where information is required urgently, HR Services may contact the referee and request a verbal reference. In this instance, information given verbally should be recorded on a file note for future reference.

Make UK reserve the right to contact referees directly to discuss information provided in references and clarify a candidate's suitability to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Managers Interpretation of References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. Once in receipt of the successful candidate's references, HR Central Services will inform the Hiring Managers when a satisfactory reference has been received i.e. any less than satisfactory references will be brought to the attention of the appropriate member of the A&S management team.

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be obtained and scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed.

It is the responsibility of the appointing manager to ensure that references are scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily.

Upon receipt of all references, the recruiting manager should:

- Scrutinise the reference carefully, giving active consideration to the significance of all information provided
- Check that the information provided is not contradictory or incomplete
- Check to ensure that all specific questions on the reference pro forma have been answered satisfactorily. Referees should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate
- Compare the information provided to ensure it is consistent with the information provided by the candidate on the application form
- Take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- If there are any anomalies or doubts about the candidate's suitability to fulfil the requirements of the role, the recruiting manager should contact the referee and explore the issues, asking the referee whether there are any reasons that would prevent them from re-employing the candidate. The HR Manager should make and retain a detailed written record of all such discussions and sign the record.

Receiving Reference Requests

It is the duty of the referee to exercise reasonable care to:

Ensure that all references written are accurate, not misleading, justified and true

- Ensure the information is factually correct
- Express opinions (if the writer chooses to do so) about the subject of the reference which are reasonable in the circumstances and can be justified
- Create a fair impression overall. This might mean putting certain factual matters into context where not to do so would create a misleading impression.

In order to complete the cycle of effective protection of children and vulnerable adults, from potential abuse and neglect by staff and volunteers, it is essential to ensure that when managers are asked to provide references, they are written with the following 4 objectives in mind:

- **Deter** unsuitable people who have behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children and young people from seeking employment or opportunities to volunteer
- **Reject** applications from unsuitable people
- **Prevent** abuse and neglect of children by staff and volunteers
- **Identify** incidents of abuse and neglect by staff and volunteers and respond appropriately.

In particular, managers should provide honest, objective and factual information about any concerns discussed with the applicant about their practice with children and/or vulnerable adults; any investigations of allegations other than those that led to a conclusion that the allegation was false or malicious; and any disciplinary action in respect of the applicant's practice with children and/or vulnerable adults including outcomes and any sanctions imposed.

This requirement highlights the importance of managers addressing concerns with employees and volunteers as early as possible and maintaining a clear record of all such discussions. This must include discussions undertaken in the context of day to day management and supervision, as well as formal investigation and disciplinary processes.

Having checked the factual accuracy of statements and reasonableness of opinions contained in the reference, the referee should then ensure that the effect of the whole reference is fair and not misleading.

If a previous employee was subject to a disciplinary sanction which were spent at the termination of employment (unless relating to safeguarding), questions regarding disciplinary sanctions should be responded to using the following wording, 'There were no outstanding allegations or live disciplinary sanctions on the employees file at the termination of employment.'

Where the referee has limited knowledge of the subject, this should clearly be stated.

Requests for references should be responded to promptly.

Make UK adopt a standardised approach to the completion of references, HR Officer will complete the reference using the appropriate pro-forma relevant to the disclosure required.

In line with GDPR, upon receipt of the reference request, the HR Officer will contact the requesting organisation, requesting the employees written consent to provide a reference on their behalf.

The individuals line manager will also be contacted, with a request for suitable comments as appropriate, providing the line manager with a 5 working day deadline for a response. Upon receipt of the line managers comments and the individuals written consent, the reference will be returned to the requesting organisation.

The reference will also be saved on the former employees electronic file for future reference.

In circumstances where information is required urgently, the referee may be called upon to give a telephone reference. This should be approached with caution but should not be unreasonably refused.

If the person requesting the reference is unknown, their workplace telephone number should be established to call them back ensuring it is the right person in the right organisation.

The referee should reserve the right not to answer specific questions but be as helpful as possible. Notes of the questions asked should be taken and the answers given.

DBS Service & Qualifications

Make UK aim to comply with the procedures and regulations relating to DBS checks on employees in accordance with the Code of Practice provided by the DBS, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Make UK DBS Policy is a separate policy and is available on request

All candidates are required to present identity documents and qualification certificates if invited to attend a second stage interview.

Upon commencement of employment, all A&S educational delivery staff are required to attend an induction appointment with a member of the A&S Quality Compliance team for CV and original qualification certificates to be verified with appropriate external awarding bodies.

In the absence of physical certificates, the organisation will accept written confirmation by the appropriate awarding bodies, which confirm that the individual has obtained the requisite qualifications.

9 RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK CHECKS

Under section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 (“the Act”) an organisations may be liable for a civil penalty if they employ someone who does not have the right to carry out the work in question.

All employers have a duty to prevent illegal working in the UK by people who are subject to immigration control. If this is not complied with, they may face a financial penalty (civil penalty of up to a maximum of £20,000 per illegal worker) and in some cases, prosecution.


Organisations can avoid becoming liable for a civil penalty and prosecution by carrying out simple specified document checks on people before employing them, to ensure they are allowed to work in the UK. This check needs to be repeated when someone has temporary permission to be in the UK and to work. Conducting these checks in the prescribed manner will provide a statutory excuse against a civil penalty.

In order to comply with Right to Work in the UK legislation specified document checks are carried out by the HR Services on all employees prior to them being employed. Follow-up checks are also conducted on people who have time-limited permission to be in the UK and work.

There is no requirement to check the status of internal applicants who are already employed by Make UK, unless they leave and seek re-employment.

10 RISK ASSESSMENT

Where it can be demonstrated, through a risk assessment that there will be no contact, or no unsupervised contact with learners under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults, an earlier start can be considered when there are outstanding pre-employment checks (eg. A DBS has not yet been returned, a reference hasn't yet been received). Details of the risk assessment must be recorded on the risk assessment form, along with the decision of the Recruitment and Resourcing Lead. The risk assessment form must be kept for future reference.

Policy Author	Policy Signature	Last Review Date	Policy Date	Policy Review Date
Jayne Griffiths Compliance Manager		January 2026	February 2026	February 2027