



Safer Recruitment Policy

October 13th, 2022

Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in Hood CIC is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable youth and young adults.

Hood CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Hood CIC is also committed to providing a supportive working environment for all its members of staff. Hood CIC recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

Hood CIC recognises the value of and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce. Hood CIC is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the Community Interest Company is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and promotes equality of opportunity.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in Hood CIC's other policies:

- Hood CIC's Safeguarding Policy 2022
- Hood CIC's Equal Opportunities Policy 2022
- Hood CIC's Privacy Policy 2022

The aims of the Policy

To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the specific role at our Community Interest Company.

To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.

To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any ground including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

To ensure that Hood CIC meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

We operate a Trauma Informed CIC, and this will be reflected throughout the recruitment process.

Advertising

Applicants will receive a job description and person specification for the role applied for.

All applicants for employment will be required to send a curriculum vitae to Hood CIC.

A pro forma is used to cross match skills set to the person specification and job description.

The applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experiences will be discussed in more detail.

References will be taken up before interview were practicable.

Interview Process

The selection process will always include the following:

- A tour of Hood's Office

- A face to face professional interview including questions relating to safeguarding children
- Verification of Qualifications and/or professional Status

Short listed applicants will be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of interview.

Hood CIC will verify that applicants have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution.

If the original documents are not available, Hood CIC will require sight of a properly certified copy.

Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the Chief Executive.

Hood CIC requires applicants to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on the curriculum vitae. Where any applicant is shortlisted, any gaps will also be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in an application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected. Where false information is provided in support of an application to work at Hood CIC, we will be required to report the matter to the Disclosure and Barring Service, the Police and other relevant professional bodies.

The interview recording form uses RAG rating system and this will be used for all candidates. Their scores will help inform the decision to appoint.

All interview notes will be kept on the applicant's file in line with our Privacy Policy.

The Chief Executives with the Directors will determine the successful candidate.

The Chief Executive will inform the successful candidate usually by phone, but this will always be followed up by written communication which will be copied to all Directors.

No post will be confirmed until satisfactory references and other vetting/checks are complete.

References

References for shortlisted applicants will be requested immediately after short-listing.

The only exception to this is where applicants have indicated on the application forms that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted.

In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being made.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied. All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification relevant to the role for which the applicant had applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- The applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record
- Their relationship to the applicant
- Whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children
- Whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired
- Whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people

Hood CIC will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or open references of testimonials.

Hood CIC will not accept references from relatives of the applicant or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend.

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent.

Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant and/or the referee before any appointment can be confirmed.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Due to the nature of the work, Hood CIC applies for an enhanced disclosure check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of all members of staff, proprietors and volunteers on entry to the CIC's workforce.

An enhanced disclosure check will contain details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer.

An enhanced disclosure will also reveal whether an applicant is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by virtue of his/her inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults maintained by the DBS.

An enhanced disclosure may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question.

DBS checks will be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

These applicants may also be asked to provide further information, including the equivalent of an enhanced DBS disclosure, from the relevant jurisdiction(s).

For any person who have applied to the DBS update service Hood CIC will examine the original certificate, check it matches the individual's identity and run an online update check, which will provide information about any changes since the certificate was issued. If the check indicates that there has been a change then the individual must apply for a new certificate.

If there is a delay in receiving an enhanced DBS disclosure before a person starts work in regulated activity, the Chief Executive may allow the member of staff to commence work:

after a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person is working in regulated activity;

- and all other relevant checks have been completed satisfactorily;
- provided that the DBS application has been made in advance;
- with appropriate safeguards taken (for example, Risk Assessment carried out and appropriate supervision put in place)

Overseas Checks, where appropriate:

If, because a person 'living or having lived' outside of the UK for three months or more in the last five years, a DBS check is not considered sufficient to establish suitability to work in a Community Interest Company (because a UK check would not cover offences committed abroad, but only those on the UK Police National Computer), Hood CIC would carry out such further checks as the proprietor considers appropriate. Such checks will be completed before the person starts work. This applies where relevant both to foreign nationals and UK nationals returning from overseas.

Further checks could include where applicable overseas criminal record checks and for those seeking a position within Hood CIC, obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating body in the country in which the applicant has worked.

Independent Contractors, Casual Staff and Agency Staff

Casual staff will complete an application form, be subject to all checks outlined in this policy and have an interview. This will then be followed up with an Induction pathway/Safeguarding/Health and Safety training.

Independent Contractors working at Hood CIC with Young People (i.e. teaching, driving etc.) are subject to the same checks that Hood CIC is required to complete for its permanent staff.

The Directors require confirmation that these checks have been completed before the independent contractor can commence work at Hood CIC.

Hood CIC will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by an employment agency.

Where an Agency staff member wishes to work for Hood CIC in the longer term an informal discussion will take place with a Director.

The Chief Executive will inform the Agency of our decision to recruit the Agency staff member (within six weeks of the Agency Staff member start date at the Community Interest Company).

A formal interview will be held in line with our Recruitment Policy. All enhanced checks and vetting will be completed, and a formal offer of employment made with a commencement date agreed with the agency and the Agency staff member.

At that time, we will clarify the start date for taking the staff member on to our payroll.

An Agency member of staff will not be employed through the agency for more than a period of three months. This is because using Agency staff members can be costly.

Where an Independent Contractor is working for us for longer than six weeks consecutively delivering lessons or directly with Young People they will need to have a formal interview along with the other checks outlined here.

An Independent Contractor will not be employed by the CIC for longer than six weeks without an induction interview. In the interview the Independent Contractor will be given a series of SMART targets which match those in induction of a permanent member of Hood staff. This is to ensure that Independent Contractors are skilled in safeguarding.

Independent Contractors and Agency Staff will be expected to read the Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policy before commencing any work in the Community Interest Company.

Policy of recruitment on Ex-Offenders

Hood CIC will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed.

Hood CIC makes appointment decisions based on merit and ability.

If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within Hood CIC.

Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All positions within Hood CIC are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions, including those which would normally be considered “spent”, when applying for a position at the CIC.

A failure to disclose a previous conviction may lead to any application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.

A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for Hood CIC to employ anyone who is barred from working with children.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at Hood CIC. Hood CIC will make a report to the Police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service if: -

- It receives an application from a barred person
- It is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant’s application or
- It has serious concerns about an applicant’s suitability to work with children.

Assessment Criteria

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, Hood CIC will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;

The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;

- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;

- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is Hood CIC's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences:

- Murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm, or other serious acts of violence
- Serious Class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.
- If the post involved access to money or budget responsibility, it is Hood's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.
- If the post involves some driving responsibility, it is Hood CIC's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

Employment Offer

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred applicant, however, the checks detailed above must all be completed before a person's appointment is confirmed. Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed and received, an offer of employment will be made.

A contract of employment will be issued upon satisfactory completion of the probation period, usually six weeks from start date.

We follow the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the employment practices code.

If an applicant is appointed, Hood CIC will retain any relevant information provided on his/her application form, together with any attachments and evidence of the pre-employment checks completed on his/her personnel file.

If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after six months.

Hood CIC will store all confidential personnel files in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to members of the HOOD senior management team;

Personnel files will be kept for in line with our Privacy Policy after people have left.

Hood CIC will also ensure that any personnel information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding.

Hood CIC's Admin will manage the completion of the recruitment process once an offer has been made.

Hood CIC's Admin will be trained in Safe Recruitment.

Staff members have a duty through their contract and outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct to immediately disclose during their employment if they are:

- charged or convicted of any criminal offence;
 - in receipt of a police caution, reprimand or warning, or if there is a formal child protection;
 - disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (when working in relevant childcare provision)
 - Barred from working with children or vulnerable adults;
- the subject of a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Staff will also be asked at their regular PPD meetings whether they have any of the above to disclose, including where relevant disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.

Induction

All Casual staff, Independent Contractors, Agency staff and Permanent staff, will be subject to a period of Induction.

During the Induction Period staff will receive training on Safeguarding and Health and Safety.

SMART targets will be set around Hood CIC's policy and procedure.

The Staff Disciplinary Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy form the basis for Induction.

All Casual staff, Independent Contractors, Agency staff and Permanent staff who fail to meet Hood CIC's expectations around safeguarding and professionalism will have their employment terminated with immediate effect. The following is non-exhaustive list of reasons why a person would fail their induction period.

- Failure to safeguard Young People
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Lack of professional boundaries
- Not following Hood CIC's procedures
- Breach of Health and Safety

A Contract of Employment will only be issued upon satisfactory completion of the induction period.

This policy is reviewed every year by the Chief Executive, Director's and DSL. This policy will be amended annually to reflect any change in legislation or practice within the Community Interest Company.

Reviewed October 13th, 2022, to be reviewed October 13th 2023