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Version 5 - May 2019	MW	May 2020
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Version 8 – January 2024	NH	January 2025

Statement

Bridge Training Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students. This policy is for staff, volunteers, and potential applicants. To ensure this, our recruitment and selection policy is in accordance with both local (GSCP) and national (DfE *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* guidance.

Aim

Having a safe culture is a key part of Safeguarding. Safer Recruitment has key elements which are.

- A robust recruitment and selection process by
 - identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
 - further developing a robust safer recruitment process
- Relevant vetting and checking process
 - responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have been recruited.
- A robust induction by
 - ensuring that all new staff and volunteers participate in the induction process which includes Child Protection.
- A good training infrastructure
 - promoting safe practices and challenge poor or unsafe practice
 - enabling prompt and appropriate responses to concerns about a student's welfare and know the supporting and referral process.

Bridge Training has an effective recruitment process including the undertaking of full pre-employment checks ie DBS checking, evidence of identity, evidence of eligibility to work in the UK two satisfactory references, proof of qualifications (if necessary for the post), a standard job application form (CVs are not acceptable) and also having effective induction, training, and supervision processes in place to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding.

Stages of the recruitment process (see Appendix 1)

Stage 1 – Planning the recruitment process & defining the role

Taking a planned and structured approach will help.

- minimising the risk of someone unsuitable
- ensuring that the process is fair.
- detailed records are kept for audit and future reference.
- Creation of job description and person specification
- Identify interview panel.
- Gather resources.

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For any role working with young people and vulnerable adults, the job description will highlight the Safeguarding responsibilities.

Stage 2 - Advertising the Role

The job advert will include a clear Safeguarding message with a statement about Bridge Training's commitment to Safeguarding:

'Bridge Training Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment'.

The job description will include a reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and the person specification will include suitability to work with our students.

The job advert will also detail the requirement for the completion of an enhanced DBS disclosure check. This will also be reflected in the information pack sent to all applicants, along with the requirement to complete a self-disclosure form, due to the post being exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All candidates will be directed to Bridge Training's website to read our Child Protection Policy.

All correspondence between Bridge Training and an applicant (whether by email or post) will be stored in a file to provide a chronological track of all communication sent and received. To ensure we comply with the GDPR. Bridge Training will shred the information of all unsuccessful candidates.

All roles are advertised on our website and on other external sites so that a wide selection of applicants can be attracted.

Stage 3 - Application Process

Bridge Training will send out a standard application form to all potential applicants, to provide a common set of core data (as a minimum), which will include:

- Current and former names
- Current address
- Full details of qualifications relevant to the position applied for, including awarding body and date of award. (Teachers will need to provide proof of being occupationally competent to a minimum of level 3 in their industry)
- Full history in chronological order showing employment, study, voluntary work, with explanations for any periods not covered, and reasons for leaving employment.
- Declaration of any family or close relationship to existing or potential employees or employers
- Details of referees – one of whom must be current or most recent employer. For an employee not currently working with children, but who has done so in the past it is important that the past employer should also be contacted.

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- Applicants will be informed that references will be taken up prior to the interview, if the candidate is short-listed, and that information will be requested regarding any past disciplinary issues relating to children or young people or any child protection concerns there may have been.
- A statement from the applicant of their personal qualities and experience, which they believe meets the person specification.

Bridge Training will carefully scrutinise all application forms received (initial sift), to identify any anomalies or areas of concern, which need to be followed up at interview. This will include any gaps in service or mid-career moves.

If the candidate is successful and invited to interview, then an-online check will be completed (as detailed on the application form), and References requested (consent is detailed on the application form).

An overview of our Safer Recruitment process will also be sent (Appendix 1), so that candidates understand what information will be sought and why at each stage of the process.

Self-disclosure form

Self-disclosures are considered a vital part of Safer Recruitment, as it provides the candidate with the opportunity to share information at an early stage, which can then be discussed at the interview. This measure may also act as a deterrent against unsuitable people applying for the post.

Bridge Training will only send out a self-disclosure forms if the candidate is successful through the initial application sift. The information is an assurance that information in the disclosure could be discussed when and if the candidate is invited for interview.

Self-disclosure forms contain sensitive, confidential information. Forms will be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential', or through our secure, online system.

Stage 4 – The Interview and Preparing for interview

All interview panels will understand their roles, and the panels will include two people with at least one member of senior staff trained in safer recruitment (chair). The same panel will see all the candidates for a post.

Original documentation of relevant academic and vocational qualifications will be required to be produced at the interview stage. Candidates will be informed of this requirement at the initial stage when they receive the application pack.

The interview

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified so far to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria identified above. Consideration, including discussion with the candidate, will also need to be given to any information

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regarding previous records of cautions or convictions including information provided on the self-disclosure form. Discussion will also take place regarding any significant periods of sickness absence.

A standard set of questions (to ensure fairness) will be prepared in advance – two questions will be about Safeguarding (their understanding and a referral process), some questions will relate to the person specification and enable the interview panel to explore the candidate's suitability to work with our students, their attitude and motivation for applying for the role.

For a teaching role the applicant will be asked to undertake a practical activity, such as a micro-teach to demonstrate knowledge and competency.

Notes will be taken during the interview from each panel member to act as evidence for assessing each candidate. A scoring system is embedded into this process to ensure that the same criteria is followed for each candidate.

An identity check will be done when the candidate attends for interview.

It is our preference that interviews are done face-to-face.

Stage 5 - Making an offer and pre-employment checks (See Appendix 2)

The offer letter will include that the offer of employment subject to satisfactory completion of the Safer recruitment process.

In addition to the checks already detailed, Bridge Training will ensure that an Enhanced DBS Disclosure check is completed prior to the new employee commencing the post, if applicable to their role. As DBS disclosures are sent directly to the individual, it is their responsibility to ensure this is passed onto the appropriate person within Bridge Training.

If references, vetting, disclosure and barring checks reveal concerns about a person's history, Bridge Training will assess whether they are suitable to work with children and young people and the offer of employment will be put on hold so that decisions can be made to consider everything thoroughly.

If necessary, Bridge Training will pass on information to the relevant authorities, such as the criminal records agency, professional bodies, or police.

Stage 6 - Unsuccessful Candidates

Standardised letters will be sent to the unsuccessful candidates. Confidential information, such as the application form, references etc will be destroyed.

Stage 7 - Induction

All new members of staff (including volunteers) will be given a thorough induction programme, which will clearly identify Bridge Training's policies and procedures, including safeguarding, and make clear the expectations and codes of conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles. This will give the opportunity to provide

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discussion of any relevant issues. The induction programme will ensure that all new staff are aware of the following policies and procedures and how to access them:

- Safeguarding and Student Support (e.g. child protection disclosure and referral process, IAG)
- Anti- discrimination
- Physical intervention/restraint
- Internet safety
- Discipline and grievance
- Capability
- Whistle-blowing
- Health and Safety

Stage 8 - Probationary Period

All new staff will be placed on a six-month probation period from the commencement of their post. This period allows both the employee and Bridge Training to see if they are a 'good fit' and to make things easier if an Employment Contract needs to be terminated. The probationary period should consider the new employees' performance, skills, and abilities. The Annual Appraisal framework and full appraisal paperwork must be used to define the outcome as the framework has set objectives required by Bridge Training and is not subjective.

Once the probationary period is over and if both parties are happy with the employment arrangements, the employee is typically removed from probation and this will initiate contractual obligations, as defined in the employment contract, such as longer notice periods. If the employee is not successful through the initial probationary period, then this can be extended month by month to allow the employee time to meet their targets and outcomes.

What Reasons are there for extending a probation period?

Probation Period extension reasons could include the employee needing to:

- Improve their performance
- Meet targets
- Improve attendance or punctuality
- Correct general conduct in the workplace
- Learn a new skill that will allow them to meet required standards

If the employee suffers a long leave of absence, Bridge Training can decide that an extension will give them the time needed to review the criteria within the Appraisal Framework.

How long should an extended probation period be?

The agreed extension **MUST** be agreed in the Probationary meeting and documented on the Appraisal paperwork; it **MUST** state the following;

- The extension reasons
- Targets for the employee
- Date of the next performance review

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Bridge Training may also place existing employees on a probation period if their performance has been unsatisfactory or if they have been guilty of misconduct. This probationary period is typically a time for the employee to improve their performance, in the case of misconduct, for an investigation to take place.

Stage 9 - Creating a safer culture

Bridge Training recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. Bridge Training will therefore provide on-going training and support for all staff, as identified through performance management. It will also provide a range of opportunities where concerns can be raised, for staff to feel that the culture of Bridge Training embraces safeguarding and communicates a clear framework to employees, external partners, parents, and students. It will monitor issues as they arise, and using such strategies as exit interviews will seek to continually improve Bridge Training, for the benefit of both staff and students.

All staff and volunteers should feel responsible for helping to make a safer culture and empowered to speak out if they have concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities for BTL Staff

Senior Management Team

- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy.
- Be familiar with the latest government guidance on Safer Recruitment
- Ensure structures are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy.
- To ensure adequate numbers of senior members of staff complete Safer Recruitment Training to sit in the interview panel.
- To ensure safeguarding is central to the interview process and that all procedures are followed as explained above.

Administrative staff

- To ensure vetting and checking processes are in place and followed.
- To ensure that the Safer Recruitment process is followed.

All Staff

- To follow safeguarding policies and procedures
- To report any concerns, they may have about a student/member of staff through the appropriate channel.

Ongoing supervision and training

Supervision and training will be regular and ongoing. This gives everyone a chance to reflect on and improve their child protection practice and keeps safeguarding at the front of their minds ensuring everyone is kept up to date with any changes that are made to your safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

Stage 1 - Planning the recruitment process & defining the role - creation of job description and person specification / identifying the interview panel.

Stage 2 - Advertising the Role - All roles are advertised on our website and on other external sites so that a wide selection of applicants can be attracted.

Stage 3 - Application Process - Bridge Training will send out a standard application form to all potential applicants, to provide a common set of core data.

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Appendix 2 – Carrying out the risk assessment

Decisions about whether to employ someone whose vetting checks raised concerns should be made on a case-by-case basis. A risk assessment will work out whether they are suitable to work with children and young people.

Bridge Training will share information about an applicant's criminal record with those who need to know. The applicant should be told who at Bridge Training knows about their record.

The applicant will usually know about any information revealed during a vetting or barring check. You should discuss any concerns with them as part of the risk assessment process.

- Past convictions might be a great source of anxiety and embarrassment for the person concerned, so you need to act with sensitivity and empathy.
- Take all reasonable steps to gather as much relevant information as possible.
- Make sure a third party is present during the discussions. Ask a colleague who was involved in the recruitment process to support you and take notes.
- Carefully plan the questions you need to ask in advance and keep the discussion focused on the individual, their feelings, and attitudes
- It is not your responsibility to decide whether a legal decision was right or fair – you need to decide whether the applicant is suitable to work or volunteer with children and young people.

Making the decision

Follow Bridge Trainings procedures to make sure all recruitment decisions are consistent. The reasons for your decision should be objective, rational, and easy to understand. Things to consider include:

- the nature of the offence and its seriousness
- the relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children, and their families
- the length of time since the offence took place
- the length of the sentence
- whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending
- the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- whether these circumstances have changed (if so, do these changes increase or reduce the likelihood of similar offences happening in future?)
- whether the individual has changed since the offence (if so, what has led to the change and does this reduce or increase the likelihood of them committing further offences?)
- level of remorse expressed by the applicant and/or any efforts to change.
- whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend
- any legal constraints relevant to the role, for example if the person has lost their driving licence and the role requires driving.