

# Recruitment: Policy, Procedure and Practice

(R.E.A.L. Foundation Trust.)

August 2021

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## Section 1: The Policy

### 1.1 Introduction

The R.E.A.L. Leadership Team (hereinafter referred to as `the Company`) place great importance on, and are committed to, ensuring the safe recruitment of all employees and other persons (e.g. volunteers, or befrienders) who may be involved in the work activities of the Company in order to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe from harm. This policy document has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2019), and statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2018). The company is committed to the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults in our care.

The purpose of this policy is to put into place recruitment procedures which aim to discourage, reject, and prevent adults who wish to cause harm to children and young people and encourage those adults who possess the skills, qualities, experience and qualification level to work as an employee of the company.

### 1.2 The Recruitment Policy Statement

The company is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff, volunteers and other workers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through robust policy, procedure, and practice. The recruitment and retention of competent, motivated and skilled employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake will ensure positive outcomes for the young people we care for.

The company recognises the value of a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. We are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all is consistent, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. Selection will be made based on the most suitable candidate, assessed against the qualifications, skills and competencies required to do the job. We will uphold obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief.

## Section 2: Pre-recruitment Planning

The companies recruitment strategy will be based on:

1. Supply to demand for services
2. Responding to the needs of our Young People
3. Progressive service delivery and company evolution

We understand the need to be responsive and hold a regular resource forecasting meeting which involves key stakeholders from the company who collectively trigger recruitment campaigns based on one or more of the three indicators identified above.

## 2.1 Step 1: Instigating recruitment

Recruitment should be based on a clear business need. The rationale for any new recruitment will be outlined in a business case made to Directors for approval. This should include reference to how the post will be line managed, any cost implications and terms and conditions of employment.

Where a post has been vacated and recruitment is to replace a previous employee a business case should still be made to enable any implications of continuation to be considered and whether or not the post is still required.

Due regard should also be taken to consider how and where to advertise the post. There may be times where specific industry publications are required to be used but this is expected to be the exception. Most recruitment advertisements will be via online platforms with candidates being directed to [www.realft.org](http://www.realft.org) to apply.

Through the recruitment business case a Recruitment Lead should be identified. The Recruitment Lead will have completed Safer Recruitment Training, and have the authority to appoint candidates and make recommendations regarding salary.

## 2.2 Discourage

To discourage the applications of adults who may wish to harm young people or vulnerable adults, and in adherence of safer recruitment practices, all posts will require a Disclosure and Barring Check (either standard or enhanced depending on the job description and nature of regulated job activity), and will be subject to reference checks. These procedures will be made clear on all advertisement documents, with safeguarding policies made available to all potential candidates. This is to discourage candidates who are unsuitable to work with young people or vulnerable adults.

## 2.3 Advertisement of vacancies

There are no best practice techniques with regards to advertising positions. The company favour the use of online websites, as publications tend to be expensive and do not always provide the volume of applications for a successful recruitment campaign.

Through the process of instigating recruitment (see point 1.2) the consideration of where to advertise has already been referred to. It is important to think about the specific post and ask for some advice from HR, or other colleagues. There should also be consideration given to the speculative CV's received on a regular basis by the company. If a candidate is identified through a speculative CV, they are directed to apply via the application form or the advertised post on the company's website along with all other external candidates.

All externally advertised posts will be available via the company website, therefore further advertisement may only need be a circulated email directing interested parties to apply via the company website.

Some posts will be ring fenced to internal applications initially. The company wants to be a progressive and supportive employer and to offer opportunities for career development. In light of this, internal candidates may only be asked to submit expressions of interest outlining how they meet the person specification rather than completing a full application.

A template for recruitment advertising is available. The template includes due regard to identifying the Recruitment Lead, assigning closing and short listing dates, providing potential interview dates and consideration of the interview panel. This information can then be used when informing candidates of the interview arrangements.

## 2.4 Applications

Applicants will be asked to apply via our website using a standard company application form. All applicants will be directed towards the relevant job description, person specification and a R.E.A.L. Foundation Trust application fact sheet stating important information about the company. This includes statements about the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, health benefits, and information relating to vehicles, e.g. MOT and insurance documentation.

## 2.5 Shortlisting candidates

Person specifications will be used to shortlist all posts. Where possible, all essential criteria should be met, however we reserve the right to further progress internal applicants based

on proven outstanding performance. Where a large pool of candidates exists, then the desirable criteria should be used to determine candidates to invite to interview.

Where a post is advertised without a person specification, for example a career development opportunity or additional responsibility, then a clear criteria should be available to candidates so they are able to match themselves against the opportunity.

Where possible, the Recruitment Lead and other interview panel members should shortlist together, and then interview together. This will ensure consistency of approach and minimise any subjectivity regarding potential candidates.

## 2.6 Invitation to interview

Invitation to interview will be made in writing, including any additional information about the interview panel, additional activities or tasks. Where possible, candidates will be asked to meet with a panel of young people as well. A single point of contact will be given to candidates in order for them to ask any relevant questions and make arrangements for changes to any interview times or dates. Candidates will be given the opportunity to ask for any further assistance with an interview, for example, if they have a disability the company should take into consideration any reasonable adjustments requested by the candidate.

Interviewees will be asked to bring their relevant identification documentation and certification of qualifications to interview. These will be viewed at the interview stage and photocopies will be taken at later stages for appointable candidates as part of the pre-employment checks.

The company reserves the right to contact referees prior to interview, with the applicant's consent. However, normal procedures will be to ask for references subject to any employment contract. Contacting referees can be a lengthy process and should not delay any recruitment schedule.

## 2.7 Speculative Candidates

The company receives speculative CVs from interested parties throughout the year expressing their interest in the work we do with young people. We endeavour to shortlist speculative CVs and make approaches to suitable people when posts are available. However, it is not always possible to process all speculative CVs and an automatic

response to all interested parties will be to check the company website for vacancies on a regular basis.

It is acknowledged that at times potential candidates may make themselves known to the company and, where known by members of staff and if their reputation is such that the company would be interested in offering employment, interviews may be arranged. In such circumstances a recommendation should be made through the process outlined in point 2.11 and a business case made to Directors.

## **2.8 Recruitment of agency staff**

The company will, on occasion, need to make use of approved recruitment agencies, particularly where there is an increased demand for services or where a member of staff is either on long term leave or through illness or on compassionate leave. The use of agency staff in this instance will be necessary in order to maintain existing programmes of provision and should be authorised through the R.E.A.L. Leadership Team (RLT). Only recruitment agencies with whom the company has an agreed contract should be used. Recruitment agency supply applicants will always be interviewed before offering any contract of employment, regardless of the length of the contract.

## **2.9 Recruitment of Volunteers**

The company is committed to offering opportunities to all individuals, regardless of experience and/or qualifications. Therefore, sometimes volunteering opportunities are offered to individuals who make contact and want to either have a career change or get into working with young people with additional needs.

In our commitment to safer recruitment practices, the company will follow the same recruitment practices when recruiting volunteers. Volunteers will be added to the single central register. Work shadowing opportunities are time limited and should not exceed 4 weeks (aggregate). All volunteering activities are supervised by a named employee. For further information regarding the recruitment or use of volunteers, visit <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/> for national guidance and good practice guide.

## **Section 3: Interviewing and meeting candidates**



### 3.1 Step 2: The Interview Process

The interview process is designed to provide equity of recruitment and ensure the employment of the most suitable candidates. Questions will be agreed and made available to candidates, either prior to interview (if reasonable adjustments are to be made) or in the interview. The same questions will be posed to all candidates in any recruitment round and will concentrate on the relevant person specification and job skills for the post.

Before asking any interview questions to candidates, the Recruitment Lead should provide an introduction to outline the post, including any important information about hours, working patterns, location of work or the employment contract which is relevant. The candidate should also be made aware of when they will be notified of the outcome of the interview. The candidate should then be asked if they wish to continue with the interview.

The purpose of the interview is to:

- Gather information to assess the candidate's suitability for the job
- Give information to candidates so that they can decide if the post is right for them
- Ensure a fair selection process to all candidates
- Leave all candidates with a good first impression of the company

### 3.2 Reject

Although the interview process is designed to ask each candidate standard pre-prepared questions, it may also include specific questions to the candidates about any anomalies in their employment history, with particular reference to any gaps and reasons for leaving previous employment. This process is designed to reject, at this stage, any unsuitable candidates who should not work with young people or vulnerable adults and is considered to be best practice for safer recruitment. Therefore, all applications should be thoroughly read prior to the interview to ensure that these questions are posed to candidates.

### 3.3 The Recruitment Panel

The recruitment panel should consist of at least two members of staff, with one being the identified Recruitment Lead. Although one to one interviews have an advantage of putting candidates at ease, it does make it more difficult for the interviewer to concentrate on, and consider, the candidates responses, as well as taking sufficient notes. It also helps to have two people when making selection decisions.

As a progressive company who continues to look for innovative ways of working and being efficient we have also adopted an assessment centre approach where multiple candidates are invited to interview and each one passes through the same questions in a different order, this provides a flexible climate, time saving whilst maintaining a fair and consistent process.

Where possible, a young people's panel should be considered. A young people's panel can add another dimension to the selection process by asking questions relating to other interests e.g. hobbies, and assessing the candidate's rapport with young people. The identified Recruitment Lead will agree the questions with the young people prior to commencing their interviews to check suitability and, as in point 3.1, the standard questions will be posed to all candidates to ensure equity.

The input from the young panel's panel will carry an equal weight in relation to the scoring of suitability (see point 3.4).

The recruiting panel should give consideration to the interview room and layout, provide refreshments and try to ensure minimal interruptions. This will help to make candidates feel comfortable and give them a good impression of working for the company.

### **3.4 Selection scoring**

There are many different methods of scoring candidate suitability which aid the selection processes. It is considered good practice for safer recruitment to apply a consistent scoring method. Scoring is designed to limit, and reduce the risk of subjectivity from the interviewers and provide an equality of experience for a candidate.

The company will use a simple method of scoring out of a total of five points. This method will be reviewed in line with the policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose into the future.

Where a young people's panel has been used, the score should be added to that of the other interviewers to give an overall, holistic picture of suitability.

When giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates, their overall score can be referred to so that all candidates understand the systems being applied. This allows for the process to be transparent to all involved.

### **3.5 Other interview methods**

On occasion, other methods may be used in selection and interviews. This may be in the form of a test or task and should be relevant to the post being applied for. Some examples may be: preparing a lesson plan for teaching staff or a test on the use of excel spreadsheets for business support staff. In other instances a trial period may be requested (for example where a member of staff is being recruited for vocational groups). Whatever method is to be used, the candidate should be notified in writing when invited to interview so they are aware of what to expect. Reasonable adjustments can then be made for any candidates who may require additional assistance to undertake the required activity.

### **3.6 Making the final selection decision**

After the final interview, panel members should compare their notes and thoughts. It is preferable to review candidates and their performances immediately after the interview process whilst the information is still fresh in the minds of the panel. Scoring should take place at this time, but it is not important to confer as the score should be the individual interviewer's decision - scores can be compared once awarded. All discussions should be supported by assessment evidence and not just be based on a personal impression.

Where possible, the recruitment panel should make decisions on appointing new members of staff using democratic means and time for this should be available within the recruitment schedule. However, it is not essential that a recommendation for appointment has to be made on the same day as the interviews. Every appointment is a serious investment and the selection decision should not be rushed. Organising a further review meeting would be preferable to a rushed decision.

A democratic process should be the standard for making selection decisions. The recruiting panel must be satisfied that the recommended appointee is of the appropriate high standard. If reaching consensus is proving difficult:

- Reconsider the favourite candidates afresh against the essential/desirable person specification criteria for the post
- Consider reconvening to review the candidates again if the decision-making process has reached a stalemate
- If the decision is difficult due to 2 or more candidates having the same score, consider bringing them back for a further interview or additional assessment test.
- Wait for references to be returned to aid a final decision

### 3.7 Informing candidates

Once a decision has been made by the recruiting panel, an agreement with the HR department should be made regarding informing candidates. The initial offer will always be made via the telephone and, if the candidate chooses to accept the position, a formal written offer will be posted or sent via docusign together with the terms and conditions of employment. An offer of employment will always be made subject to receiving satisfactory references and all other pre-employment checks having been made (see point 4.2).

Once the successful candidate has verbally accepted, all the other candidates should be informed of the outcome. Feedback should be offered but not given unless the candidate has specifically requested it.

The HR department will then commence the pre-employment checks and issue the relevant terms and conditions of employment. This will include notification of salary scale, working hours and location. It should also include details of the employee's line manager. Until the agreed start date is reached and a written acceptance is received, the employee is not formally employed by the company.

The company reserves the right not to progress employment where references or DBS checks identify the candidate as unsuitable to work with young people or vulnerable adults.

## Section 4: Pre-employment checks and references

## 4.1 Prevent

The purpose of a consistent approach to pre-employment checks and activities is to prevent appointing anyone who may pose a risk to young people and vulnerable adults and is an essential part of the company's commitment to safer recruitment.

## 4.2 Step 3: Pre-employment Activities

The following pre-employment checks will be required:

1. receipt of at least two satisfactory references
2. verification of the candidate's identity
3. a satisfactory DBS disclosure if undertaking regulated activity.
4. a satisfactory S128 check (if an enhanced DBS is not required because the role is not classed as regulated activity)
5. verification of the candidate's medical fitness
6. verification of qualifications
7. verification of professional status where required e.g. QTS status
8. the production of evidence of the right to work in the UK
9. verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
10. disqualification under the Childcare Act (for those working with under 8 years old outside of school hours e.g. befriending services)<sup>1</sup>

## 4.3 Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK will undergo the same checks as all other staff at R.E.A.L.. This includes an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, we will make further checks, which could include a criminal record check for overseas applicants, requests for a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. This evidence will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks, this will be used to assess their suitability. Where this information is not available we would undertake a risk assessment, to assess suitability and support informed decision making on whether to

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<sup>1</sup> See [staff covered in this legislation](#)

proceed with the appointment. Although sanctions and restrictions imposed by another regulating authority do not prevent a person from taking up teaching positions in England, we will consider the circumstances that led to any restrictions or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

#### **4.4 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

All roles in the company which give substantial unsupervised access to children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants are required to declare spent and unspent convictions and cautions (unless specific offences are subject to filtering by the Police). Applicants are required to sign a DBS consent form giving consent for the DBS certificate to be copied and shared (within strict guidelines) for the purposes of considering suitability for employment.

#### **4.5 When disclosures are made**

The company ensures that those who have convictions, cautions or reprimands on their record are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. Positive disclosures will be managed on a case by case basis, taking into account the nature, seriousness and relevance to the role. Any disclosure will be accompanied by an individual risk assessment for the candidate if successful.

The following factors will be considered in each case

1. The seriousness and level of the disclosed information, including any recidivism and time between the offence(s)
2. The circumstances of the offence(s) and any changes in the applicant's personal circumstances
3. The country where the offence/caution occurred
4. If the offences were self-disclosed on the application form (non-disclosure could result in any offer of employment being withdrawn on the grounds of trust, honesty and openness) as this would demonstrate remorse

When making a recruitment decision the company will disregard any filtered convictions, cautions or reprimands which were disclosed in error.

The Disclosure and Barring Service has published a Code of Practice and accompanying explanatory guide. This Governing Body is committed to ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service in relation to the processing, handling and security of Disclosure information.

## 4.6 Single Central Record

The company keeps and maintains a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, in line with DfE requirements to comply with Safeguarding Children legislation which came into force on 1 January 2007. The company is required to produce evidence of a Single Central Record for each member of staff and all others who have regular contact with children.

The single central register includes the following information:

- Identity – name, address and date of birth;
- Medical fitness to work
- Qualifications – where the qualification is a requirement of the job i.e. those posts where a person must have QTS, NPQH;
- Evidence of permission to work for those who are not nationals of a European Economic Area (EEA) country;
- List 99 check: Individuals barred from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure Check (reference number)
- Further overseas criminal records checks where appropriate
- Date that the check was evidenced.

## 4.7 Checking references

References will be checked prior to any confirmed offer of employment and are not normally sought prior to an interview stage. This is because it is time consuming and costly to seek references at the shortlisting stage. Where 2 candidates are equally matched and scored in the interview the reference can be a deciding factor. The company will request information relating to attitude, sickness and any previous disciplinary action. A job description will be sent to the referee to aid them in writing the reference.

Detailed guidance on confidentiality when giving and receiving references may be found in the Employment Records section of the *Employment Practices Data Protection Code*

available on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office website at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk). The Code has guidance on what to do when a worker asks to see his or her own reference. This includes guidelines on what information it is reasonable to withhold if the reference enables a third party (eg the author of the reference) to be identified.

Historical reference gaps will be managed in a proactive manner, testimonial will be requested and retrospective reference where relevant. In cases where two references are not on file a risk assessment will be completed to determine the level of risk with mitigation measures being devised on a case by case basis.

Where this is relevant it is also recorded on the single central record as a note on the staff members name.

## **Section 5: Post recruitment activities**

### **5.1 Induction Activities**

The induction period is designed to enable new employees to learn about the company's practices, processes, and policies. It allows them the time to be fully prepared for their role within the organisation and is a period where employees are able to adjust to their new working environment. The standard induction is aimed at teaching roles, however, variations of this are devised between HR and line managers for other roles within the company.

All employees are required to attend a five day induction before they start with the business. The aim of the induction is to:

- welcome the new member of staff to the company and to their particular service area, this will include meeting their line manager. This allows them to build a working relationship, and ask any questions they may have about the company and/or their role within it.
- help the individual settle into their new job and work environment
- ensure the individual understands the core information about their job.

Further investment is made during the induction process as we include a shadow day and an immersion day. These elements enable the teaching staff to experience a day in the role as an observer, access their timetable, speak with the learning



managers of their students and begin to plan sessions for their first week with the learners.

It is important for all new employees to understand that performance in the company will be measured on outcomes and that all reflective practice and CPD is built on a model of *outcomes thinking*. This process puts the responsibility on the individual to evidence practice and practice improvement

## 5.2 Probationary Period

All new employees are required to complete a six month probationary period. This status allows the company time to evaluate the work of the employee and monitor aspects of their work attitude such as honesty, reliability and suitability. It also gives the employee time to evaluate if the job is right for them.

The probationary period begins with induction, through to observation and supervision and ends with a formal review meeting. The purpose of the review is to decide whether or not to continue employment with the company or to extend the probationary period if additional training and supervision is required. A successful review would formalise the permanent employment of the individual and mark the official end to the full recruitment process.

The company reserves the right to extend probationary periods or fail probationary periods for those staff who do not need the criteria.

## 5.3 Observe and Supervise

The employee will receive regular reviews throughout the probationary period to give them feedback on how they are progressing. They provide an opportunity to identify any issues which may need to be resolved and to assess the employee's suitability to work with young people and vulnerable adults. These reviews will include:

- Activity observations
- Unannounced visits
- Support & Supervision (reflective practice), informal and fo
- Attendance at meetings (e.g. curriculum planning meetings)
- Absence monitoring

The recruitment process ends with the probationary review. The length of the process is designed to give the employee time to adjust to their new working environment and to enable the company to retain excellent staff and provide a sustainable workforce into the future.

#### 5.4

Continuous performance management is in place which provides the opportunity for individualised growth and development discussions.

Effective support and supervision takes place for every role and close monitoring of role delivery is the foundation of these meetings, coupled with feedback from quality assurance mechanisms.

#### 5.5

R.E.A.L. will have due regard to the staff harms test and transferable risk which may result from the probationary period, or ongoing concerns from our disciplinary processes and staff code of conduct.

## **BUSINESS CASE FOR STAFF RECRUITMENT**

Should you wish to recruit for a specific role within the organisation, this will need to be discussed at the Directors meeting and approval sought. You will need to complete a business case form, a link to this can be found below:

[Business Case Form for Staff Recruitment](#)

Once this has been completed please forward this through along with the Recruitment Pro Forma. Further information regarding this form can be found in the next section.

## **Recruitment Pro Forma**

Following a business case approval, this form should be completed and submitted to HR for processing. This form will provide HR with all the details required to advertise your vacancy along with organising interviews following the shortlisting of candidates. The link to this form can be found below:

[Recruitment Pro Forma](#)

If you have any queries regarding these forms, please contact a member of the HR team who will be able to assist you.