
HOPE2FAMILIES SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Recruiting the right people to work and volunteer with young people

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Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers:

1. We have clear person specifications and role descriptions for all posts
2. We advertise all posts with a clear safeguarding or child protection statement
3. We provide an information pack for people interested in each post
4. We use a standard application form
5. We ask applicants to complete a separate self-disclosure form
6. We have a process for shortlisting candidates for selection, involving more than one person
7. We have a face-to-face interview or meeting with a panel of more than one person

Checks and references:

1. Ask applicants to provide at least two references before appointment and for one of these to be from the most recent place worked or volunteered (assuming they have worked or volunteered before)
2. Ask them to provide proof of identity and original copies of qualifications
3. Complete all the checks that are relevant for the role. These may include right to work checks, criminal record checks, overseas checks and checks relevant to specific sectors/professions
4. All staff, volunteers, leaders are required to complete a Self-Disclosure Form and Access NI Check

Inducting staff and volunteers:

1. Have an induction process for all new staff and volunteers
2. Provide safeguarding or child protection training for all staff and volunteers during their induction
3. Have a trial period for staff and volunteers, with a review before they are confirmed in post.
4. Ongoing support and management of staff and volunteers
5. Provide regular supervision, support and annual appraisal for all staff and volunteers

[Click here to see our self-disclosure form...](#)

[Click here to find our application form...](#)

Training, Management & Oversight:

We will ensure that staff and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate training for their role. We will maintain structures of supervision and accountability for safeguarding from board level through to staff and volunteer management.

Trustees:

Trustees of Hope2Families are required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure and barred list check from AccessNi.

Trustees of Hope2Families are also required to complete a self-disclosure form.

Safeguarding will appear as a standing item on all trustee meetings and include a summary of incidents arising or ongoing.

Our Lead Trustee for Safeguarding will be involved in all significant safeguarding incidents or issues as they arise.

Induction:

All staff and volunteers will receive adequate induction to prepare them for their new role within Hope2Families

This will cover:

1. Overview of Hope2Families - vision, history, values, personnel and structures.
2. The Role & relevant expectations including safeguarding
3. Support structures and processes.
4. Practical Information & Systems e.g. claiming expense

Probation:

This will cover:

1. All new staff will have to complete a satisfactory probationary period of at least 6 months before a full contract is confirmed. Completion of this will include a review
2. New volunteers will be viewed as being in an informal trial period for their first 2 months

Training:

All staff and volunteers will receive particular skills and safeguarding training appropriate to their job or role. This should include:

1. An awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues
2. Recognising the possibility of abuse
3. Responding to and reporting concerns, disclosures or allegations
4. Dealing with issues such as confidentiality and code of behaviour
5. Hope2Families own safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and guidelines
6. Designated Officers should receive their own specific training in line with the required outcomes identified in the **SBNI Child Safeguarding: Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2015 - 2018**.

Update training will take place at least every three years in order to keep skills and knowledge relevant. A record of all training including safeguarding will be kept for all staff and volunteers.

Line Management & Supervision:

1. All staff, leaders and volunteers will be provided with a line manager, with whom they can discuss their role on a frequent basis (at least once a month). As well as covering support and encouragement for ongoing ministry this should also ensure the delivery of excellence in safeguarding.

/Line manager for Hope2Families = Marc Taylor

/Line manager for Wildfire = Luke Taylor

/Line managers will work alongside Head and deputy Safeguarding Trustees

2. All staff, leaders and volunteers will receive an annual appraisal and volunteers working with young people will have the opportunity to give feedback and review their involvement at least once a year (September review). These will all include an opportunity to raise issues around safeguarding.

/Line manager for Hope2Families = Marc Taylor

/Line manager for Wildfire = Luke Taylor

/Line managers will work alongside Head and deputy Safeguarding Trustees

Safer recruitment procedures:

Having a safer recruitment policy statement in place is a vital first step towards keeping the children and young people who have contact with your staff and volunteers safe. But it's also important to establish clear written procedures and make sure everyone who is involved with any form of recruitment knows how to follow them.

These will ensure that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process.

We plan the whole of our recruitment process in advance to make sure we have a consistent approach every time we recruit a new staff member or volunteer.

Taking a planned and structured approach will help:

- minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- ensure you select the right person for the role
- make sure the process is fair
- make sure there are records of the process for future reference.

Following a written procedure also means we're less likely to miss anything out and that each time we recruit you're adhering to legislation and guidance. We think about the resources that we will need and how we are going to make them available. This includes making sure enough people will be available to help conduct the interviews.

Define the role:

For any role working with children and young people, both the role description and the person specification should highlight the safeguarding responsibilities.

Advertising the role:

The advertisement is your first opportunity to send out a clear safeguarding message. Every advert for a role that includes work with children should include a statement about your commitment to keeping children safe. If the role requires a criminal records check, this should be included in the advert. You should advertise all vacancies to attract a wide selection of applicants – whether the role is for paid staff or a volunteer.

Applicant information pack:

Providing an application pack ensures that people interested in applying for a role have all the information they need about our charity and the advertised vacancy. It's best practice to use a standard application form for all roles, whether paid or unpaid. This helps make sure we get all the information we need from each candidate. It will include space for the candidate to explain how they meet the criteria outlined in the person specification. We should include an overview of our safer recruitment process so that candidates understand what information will be sought from them and why, and what will be expected of them at each stage of the process.

Self-disclosure form:

A self-disclosure form gives candidates the opportunity to tell us confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record. We can only ask for the information we are entitled to know about as a potential employer. What we can ask will depend on the role they will be doing.

Applicants should complete a self-disclosure form before the interview and bring it in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'. We will only open the self-disclosure forms of candidates who have been selected for the role, and review the information inside as part of our vetting checks, applying a risk assessment process if information has been disclosed.

We must securely dispose of all unopened self-disclosure forms. The self-disclosure form does not replace the need for a criminal records check. Criminal records checks should always be carried out as appropriate to the role.

> See example self-disclosure forms via the NSPCC website

References:

We will ask applicants to provide the details of at least two referees and check references as part of our vetting checks. It's a good idea to give our candidates an overview of the questions we will be asking referees, so the candidate can consent to this information being provided. We will make sure to ask about the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people. It's best practice to use a standard reference form for all roles, to make sure we get all the information we need.

Selecting applicants for interview:

Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people. They should each be clear about what their role involves, and should assess each application form according to how well it meets the criteria set out in the person specification.

Preparing for interview:

We assess all applicants on their ability to carry out the role, based on justifiable and objective criteria. Plan a range of selection methods that are clearly related to the person specification.

Panel:

At least two people will be on the interview panel and we will have a chair. It is agreed beforehand who is responsible for ensuring all assessments are conducted fairly and candidates are treated equally.

Children's participation:

Involving children, young people and their families in recruitment can be a really useful way of finding the right people for the role.

Practical test:

A question and answer format may not be the best way to test a particular requirement or competency. We may want to consider other methods such as a practical test.

Interview:

Interviews to recruit people to work with children will be conducted face-to-face. We will ask candidates in advance whether they have any access requirements for the interview venue, and provide what they need. We will give an outline of the selection methods we will be using and ask if they need any special arrangements for these. We will plan our questions in advance. Questions that relate to items in the person specification and enable us to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children, their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role. We will ask each candidate the same questions so that they are all treated equally. We will make notes during the interview. This will form the evidence for assessing each candidate after the interviews are complete.

(Erooga, 2009).

During the interview candidates should show that they are able to:

- Establish and maintain professional boundaries and professional integrity
- Establish and maintain relationships with children
- Take action to protect a child.

Checking identity:

Check each candidate's identity during the recruitment process. The first opportunity to do this is usually when the candidate attends an assessment day and interview.

> Find out more about the checks you need to complete before taking on a new member of staff or volunteer

Making an offer:

When we contact the successful candidate, we will make it clear that the offer is still subject to satisfactory completion of all the vetting processes required to be undertaken.

Vetting, disclosure and barring checks:

We will carry out a range of processes and checks to ensure you employ the right people to work or volunteer in roles that have contact with children.

Verifying references:

References will help us make an informed decision about an applicant's suitability to work or volunteer with children.

Referees will be asked about the candidate's:

- Suitability and ability to work with children and young people
- Knowledge and understanding of child protection and safeguarding

Information provided in the reference is consistent with the information provided by the candidate in their application form and interview. We will follow up any discrepancies, concerns, or vague statements.

Criminal Record Checks:

Criminal records checks enable us to ensure that people aged 16 or over have nothing on their record that makes them unsuitable to work or volunteer in roles that have contact with children.

Each nation in the UK uses a different criminal records check process, but they are all aligned and recognise each other's decisions. A person who is barred from working with children in one nation will be barred across the UK.

Depending on the size of our charity and what kind of criminal records check you need, you can either apply directly or use an umbrella body. More information about how to apply for different kinds of checks is available from each criminal records agency.

- Northern Ireland: AccessNI provides disclosure information and the DBS carries out barring procedures for Northern Ireland.

A criminal records check is only valid on the date stated on the certificate but:

There are different types of criminal record checks depending on the nature of the work being carried out.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, if someone is doing "regulated activity" they need to undergo an "enhanced with barred list check". This provides information about adult convictions and cautions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC) that are not 'protected'; information about whether the person has been barred from working with children; and any other relevant information that the police feel ought to be disclosed. What is "regulated activity"/"regulated work"? In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, regulated activity with children means carrying out any of the below activities frequently or with intensity (more than 3 days in a 30 day period or overnight).

- Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; providing advice/guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children
- Working for a limited range of "specified places" with the opportunity for contact with children and young people, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises

These are also examples of regulated activity if unsupervised:

- Engaging in intimate or personal care of children
- Health care (including by a registered health care professional)

Other checks:

There are a range of other checks we will carry out.

Birth certificates:

It's best practice to check the successful candidate's birth certificate, to find out whether they have changed their name since birth. We will carry out vetting and barring checks for all names the person has used.

Transgender people who do not want to share gender and name information with an employer can follow a special process to apply for a criminal records check. More information is available from each criminal records agency:

- Information for transgender applicants in Northern Ireland

Right to work checks:

Even if the role is not paid, we may need to carry out a right to work check. The Home Office has published guidance on right to work checks.

(Home Office, 2021a)

Overseas checks:

If a candidate has been resident overseas for three months or more over the past five years, we should check the candidate's criminal record in that country. The Home Office provides guidance on applying for criminal records checks for overseas applicants (Home Office, 2021b).

The UK ENIC, the UK national agency for international qualifications and skills, can advise on how to check international qualifications and skills. Any documents not in English should be accompanied by a certified

translation. If you are unable to obtain overseas checks for a candidate, you should carry out a risk assessment to help make an informed decision about how best to proceed.

Disqualification from working with children: Recruiting ex-offenders

Organisations are responsible for making sure the people they employ as staff and volunteers have not been disqualified from working with children.

The Department for Education (DfE) has published statutory guidance to help organisations comply with their responsibilities.

(DfE, 2018).

Checking temporary or agency staff and visitors:

It's just as important to ensure we recruit temporary or agency staff who are suitable to work with children as it is with permanent staff. If someone is visiting our charity to run an activity with children, we must also make sure they have undergone the necessary checks. We will only engage people to work with children if they come from an agency or organisation that has robust safer recruitment policies and procedures. Ask the agency for written confirmation that the relevant safer recruitment vetting checks have been made for each temporary staff member or visitor. When supply staff arrive on site we will check for their ID.

What to do if vetting checks raise concerns:

If references, vetting, disclosure and barring checks reveal concerns about a person's history, our charity needs to assess whether or not they are suitable to work with children and young people.

It's important we have clear procedures in place for making these decisions.

We may need to put any formal offer of an appointment on hold to make sure you've got time to consider everything thoroughly.

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

Carrying out the risk assessment:

Decisions about whether or not to employ someone whose vetting checks raised concerns should be made on a case-by-case basis. A risk assessment will help us work out whether they are suitable to work with children and young people.

We only share information about an applicant's criminal record with those who need to know. The applicant will be told who in the charity knows about his/her record.

The applicant will usually know about any information revealed during the course of a vetting or barring check. We 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 we need to act with sensitivity and empathy
- All reasonable steps will be gathered as much relevant information as possible
- A third party is present during the discussions. A colleague who was involved in the recruitment process to support you and take notes.
- The questions asked will be carefully planned in advance and the discussions kept focused on the individual, their feelings and attitudes
- It is not our responsibility to decide whether a legal decision was right or fair – we need to decide whether the applicant is suitable to work or volunteer with children and young people

Risk assessment is comprised of

- 1) Our application
- 2) Our disclosure form
- 3) Our access ni check
- 4) Our vetting
- 5) Our interview process

Hope2Families complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's

suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

- This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- Hope2Families are committed to equality of opportunity (see separate Equal Opportunities Policy) to following practices, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
- Hope2families actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
- We will request an AccessNI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that Hope2Families will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check
- In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), Hope2Families will only ask about convictions which are defined as “not protected” for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
- We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned eg the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

- Hope2Families may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate.
- We ensure that all those in Hope2Families who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).
- We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING WITH HOPE2FAMILIES. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE.

Making the decision:

Our charity's procedures make sure all recruitment decisions are consistent.

The reasons for our decision should be objective, rational and easy to understand. These will be written down and kept securely, along with the notes made during our investigations.

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?)
- The 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.

Confidential information:

If the vetting and barring check includes additional information that is marked "in confidence", we will not discuss it with the applicant. This could compromise a criminal investigation or the safety of another person, and may in itself constitute a criminal offence under the Police Act 1997.

If we decide not to appoint someone on the basis of confidential information, we need to be careful when we inform them that the offer is withdrawn. It is sufficient to tell the applicant that, on the basis of checks and references that have been made, we have had to withdraw the provisional job offer.

Storing disclosure and barring checks:

We will not store copies of disclosure and barring check certificates unless there is a dispute about the results of the check. Instead, we should keep a confidential record of:

- The date the check was completed
- The level and type of check
- The reference number of the certificate
- The decision made about whether the person was employed (with reasons)

If there is a dispute about the results of a check, we may keep a copy of the certificate for no longer than six months.

Creating a safer culture:

The commitment to safeguarding children should be an ongoing process and have a high profile in our charity.

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

To help develop a safe environment for speaking out, it's important to make child protection a key part of our induction for new staff and volunteers.

Induction:

Having a consistent induction process will make sure everyone in our organisation fully understands and knows how to follow our safeguarding policies and procedures.

All new staff and volunteers will:

- Have read and understand your safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures
- Know how to spot the signs that a child may be experiencing abuse
- Know how to respond appropriately if a child makes a disclosure about abuse
- Know what to do if they have concerns about a child's wellbeing.

All staff and volunteers should complete child protection training as part of their induction – even if they say they have done this before. It's important to make sure everyone has up-to-date knowledge and skills and understands how child protection works in your organisation.

> Find out more about what level of child protection training your staff and volunteers need via the NSPCC website

We will also consider putting a mentoring and/or supervision process in place for new staff and/or having a probationary/trial period. This will allow concerns on either side to be raised and responded to appropriately.

What	Who	Date
<p>About the charity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims, philosophy and ethos • people we work/volunteer with • work/volunteering we do 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limitations of the organisation • structure: departments/teams • management 		
<p>The Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toilets, cloakrooms, parking, etc. • where to get tea/coffee/lunch • health and safety rules 		
<p>The Job/Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worker's/volunteer's area of responsibility • line management • days/hours of work/volunteering and breaks • relevant organisational policies and procedures, including the safeguarding children and young people policy • code of behaviour 		
<p>The Support System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who will supervise worker/volunteer, where and when to find them • support available • supervision/support meetings • resources, facilities, equipment, • training • complaints procedure • reasonable adjustments, if required 		
<p>Fellow Workers/Volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who and what they do 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • team meetings • working/volunteering with others 		
<p>Other Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • settling in – probationary/trial period • claiming expenses • key stakeholders and their roles 		
<p>Employee/Volunteer: I confirm that I have completed all items in the induction checklist and, where indicated, read and understood policies and procedures.</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____ Line Manager: I confirm that all items in the induction checklist have been completed by</p> <p>(name) either with me, or a member of (organisation) authorised by me.</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p>		

Ongoing supervision and training:

Supervision and training should 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.

Ensure everyone is kept up-to-date with any changes that are made to your safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures

In Northern Ireland, the key guidance is Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017). This states that:

- Organisations/charities providing services specifically to children and young people must have robust recruitment, selection and training procedures for staff and volunteers
- This includes making sure staff and volunteers have an early induction in safeguarding training before they have contact with children

Identifying and Sharing Significant Information

Significant information is any information about behaviour which may put children or young people at risk of harm and it is vital that it is shared appropriately with those agencies whose role it is to protect them e.g. police or Health and Social Care Trusts.

The following offers some guidance on information that may warrant sharing. The list is not intended to be definitive and each case should be considered carefully in line with advice from our charities Designated Officer and statutory services.

- Sexual offences including interference with children and young people, assault or exhibitionism.
- Organising prostitution or procuring.
- Attempting or planning to corrupt a child or young person.
- A history of physical violence, including domestic violence and assault occasioning risk to children or young people.
- Stealing from children and young people.
- Selling, using or possessing dangerous drugs illegally.
- Repeated drunkenness in work contexts or untreated alcoholism.
- Repeated inappropriate use of sexual language outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Repeated inappropriate touching outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Failure to provide the required level of care and attention to children and young people, including emotional abuse and neglect.
- Failure to comply with procedures where this puts the welfare of children and young people at risk.
- Any instance where a case is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Showing pornographic videos, internet images or publications to children or young people.
- Posting or accessing child pornography on the internet.

A decision as to whether there is cause for concern should be considered based on the balance of probabilities or opinions formed reasonably and in good faith. Hope2Families will be clear that there is no

requirement for them to gather evidence or conclusive proof in order to share information that may be significant in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people.

While it may be difficult to share concerns about parents, colleagues, or indeed young people, which affect important working relationships, it is essential that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm. The prompt flow of accurate information can often be for the benefit and safety of all concerned. Significant information should only be shared with appropriate personnel and agencies on a need-to-know basis.

Contact details:

Nominated child protection lead:

Marc Taylor

07514993163

wildfireministrys@gmail.com

Deputy child protection lead:

Heather Taylor

07856201383

wildfireministrys@gmail.com

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on:

..... **24th May 2022**.....(date)

Signed: *Marc Taylor*

[this will be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding in your organisation, for example the safeguarding lead on your board of trustees].

Find out more about:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/children-from-black-asian-minoritised-ethnic-communities>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/deaf-and-disabled-children>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/lgbtq-children-young-people>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/safeguarding-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>