

Safer Recruitment Policy

Next review: September 2027

1. Purpose and Safeguarding Commitment

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff, volunteers, students, contractors, and visitors to share this commitment. Safer recruitment is used to deter, identify and reject applicants who may be unsuitable to work with our service users.

This policy sets out the minimum safer recruitment standards that must be followed for all appointments. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, Data Protection Policy, Records Retention Schedule, Supervision and Appraisal Policy, Code of Conduct and Volunteer Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone recruited or engaged by Dedham Therapy Farm CIC, including employees, volunteers, students, agency staff, contractors, external providers and regular visitors who may have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Directors are responsible for ensuring safe recruitment policies and procedures are in place, followed and reviewed.
- Managers and administration staff involved in recruitment must ensure all required checks are completed before employment or volunteering begins.
- Anyone involved in recruitment must declare any personal, family or close relationship with an applicant and must not take part in decision making for that appointment.
- At least one person involved in interview decisions should have completed safer recruitment training or refresher training.

4. Recruitment Principles

- Recruitment will be fair, consistent, transparent and based on the job description and person specification.
- Applicants will be assessed on their abilities, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role.
- Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will comply with equality, employment, safeguarding, DBS and data protection requirements.
- All recruitment information will be handled confidentially and stored securely.

5. Safer Recruitment Process

Advertising

- All adverts, job descriptions and recruitment materials will include Dedham Therapy Farm CIC's safeguarding commitment.
- Recruitment materials will state that safer recruitment checks will be required.
- Vacancies will be advertised externally where appropriate to support equality of opportunity.

Application and Shortlisting

- Applicants must complete a full application form.

- The application form must include employment, education and voluntary work history, reasons for gaps, qualifications, referee details and a statement against the person specification.
- Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people wherever possible.
- Shortlisting decisions will be recorded and based on the agreed criteria.
- Employment gaps, inconsistencies, unexplained changes or safeguarding concerns will be explored before or during interview.

Interview

- Shortlisted applicants will attend an interview with at least two interviewers.
- Questions will be linked to the job description, person specification and safeguarding responsibilities of the role.
- Candidates will be asked the same core questions to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Access needs will be considered before interview.
- Concerns arising from the application, self-disclosure, references or online searches will be explored appropriately.

Pre-Employment Checks, Right to Work and Sponsorship

- Offers of employment will be made in writing and will be conditional on satisfactory checks.
- Applicants must provide original evidence of identity, address, qualifications and right to work in the UK.
- Where names differ across documents, evidence of the legal name change must be provided.
- Qualifications, professional registration where required, right to work and role-specific fitness requirements will be verified before employment starts.
- Where sponsorship or visa permission is required, employment must not begin until the correct permission to work has been confirmed.
- DBS, barred list and overseas checks will be completed where required for the role and recorded in the single central record before the person starts work or volunteering.

References

- Two employment or education references will be required wherever possible.
- One reference must be from the current or most recent employer, education provider or placement.
- If the most recent role did not involve work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, an additional relevant reference will be sought.
- Open references, testimonials and references from relatives will not be accepted.
- References will be obtained directly from the referee where possible, checked against the application form and followed up where incomplete, inconsistent or concerning.

Online Searches

- Online searches may be completed for shortlisted candidates as part of safer recruitment.
- Candidates will be informed that online searches may be undertaken.
- Searches will be limited to publicly available information relevant to suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Where possible, searches will be completed by someone not directly involved in the final appointment decision.
- Relevant concerns will be discussed with the recruitment panel and, where appropriate, with the candidate.
- Records will be factual, proportionate, secure and handled in line with data protection requirements.

6. Single Central Record

All required recruitment and vetting checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record, or equivalent central safer recruitment record, before the person starts work or volunteering. This includes identity, right to work, DBS, barred list checks where applicable, references, qualifications, overseas checks and online searches.

7. DBS, Regulated Activity and Overseas Checks

- Roles will be assessed to decide whether they involve regulated activity and what level of DBS check is required.
- An enhanced DBS check and barred list check will be completed where the role involves regulated activity.
- An enhanced DBS check without barred list check may be required where the role gives regular opportunity for contact but is not regulated activity.
- A barred list check will only be requested where legally permitted.
- The applicant must show the original DBS certificate before starting, or as soon as practicable afterwards where permitted.
- DBS information will be handled confidentially and used only to assess suitability for the role.
- Overseas criminal record checks or other suitable checks will be requested where a candidate has lived overseas and these are relevant to the role.
- DBS update service checks will be completed and recorded where applicable.

8. Self-Disclosure, Criminal Records and Concerns

- Applicants must complete a confidential self-disclosure form before interview, depending on the role.
- Roles involving work with children, young people or vulnerable adults may be exempt from parts of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, meaning relevant cautions or convictions must be declared unless legally protected.
- Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will not automatically exclude applicants with a criminal record. Any disclosed or DBS information will be assessed fairly, proportionately and in relation to the role.
- When considering criminal record information, the Farm will consider the nature, seriousness, relevance and age of the matter, whether it was isolated or repeated, any change in circumstances and any evidence of remorse.
- It is unlawful for Dedham Therapy Farm CIC to knowingly employ someone who is barred from working in regulated activity with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- If references, vetting, self-disclosure, online searches or DBS information raise concerns, the matter will be risk assessed before any appointment is confirmed.
- A formal offer may be placed on hold while concerns are considered.
- Where required, information will be referred to the relevant authority, such as the DBS, professional body or police.

9. Volunteers, Students, Contractors and Visitors

- Volunteers and students undertaking regulated activity will be subject to appropriate safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS and barred list checks where required.
- Unchecked volunteers or students must not have unsupervised contact with service users.
- Contractors, agency staff, external providers and regular visitors must meet Dedham Therapy Farm CIC's safeguarding standards.
- Where individuals are not directly employed by the Farm, written confirmation of relevant checks should be obtained from their employer or organisation.
- Contractors and visitors must be supervised where checks are incomplete or where the role does not require unsupervised contact.

10. Induction, Ongoing Monitoring and Records

- All new starters will complete an induction covering safeguarding, conduct and key policies.
- Ongoing training, supervision and appraisal will support continued suitability and safe practice.
- Recruitment records will be stored securely and retained in line with the Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.
- DBS update service checks will be completed and recorded where applicable.
- The Directors will monitor implementation through recruitment checks, audits and annual review.

11. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- Records Retention Schedule
- [Supervision and Appraisal Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- Volunteer Policy
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)