

# Apprentify Safer Recruitment Policy

## 2024-2025

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## Purpose

The safety and wellbeing of our learners is our top priority, and we take all reasonable and sensible measures to ensure they are kept safe from harm. This Safer Recruitment Policy is a key part of our wider safeguarding culture and ensures that all staff who work with our learners share our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. It has been written with regard to key legislation and regulatory guidance.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Apprentify Limited (AL).

## Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in AL is the first step to creating a culture where safeguarding and the welfare of our learners are our top priority. All employees, contractors and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

The aims of the recruitment policy are as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities, and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including (but not limited to): the Equality Act (2010), Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Employment Rights Act (1996), ACAS guidance, the Data Protection Act (2018) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- To ensure that AL meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

All employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

AL has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience, behaviours, and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it to a director as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

AL aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies.

## Authorisation to Recruit

Only Heads of Department and above are authorised to act as hiring manager: this is the individual who takes overall ownership for the recruitment process for a vacancy. Prior to any recruitment activity taking place, the hiring manager must obtain permission to recruit from a director: this is usually either the Chief Finance Officer or the HR Director or, for newly created roles, the Chief Executive Officer. When obtaining permission, the following details should be agreed:

- the role outline;
- job description (on the standard [Apprentify Job Description template](#) with our safeguarding commitment included);
- salary level;
- line manager;
- location.

Hiring managers should undergo Safer Recruitment training at least every five years.

## Publishing the Vacancy

Once permission to recruit has been granted, the hiring manager should publish the vacancy: this will usually be either via the internal Talent Team or, where necessary, through an external recruitment agency. Use of external agencies must be approved by the HR Director.

Once live, candidates will be required to provide basic personal details (such as name and contact number), and a copy of their CV.

## Selection Process

The selection process will be made up of a minimum of two stages: application review and an interview. Depending on the role, the hiring manager may decide to include additional stages to process. These could include:

- Second stage interview
- Group assessment centres
- Written/online task

Advice on the most appropriate selection process can be sought from the HR department.

## Application Review

The hiring manager will receive details of suitable applicants from the recruiter. When reviewing applications, hiring managers must consider the following information:

- Level of relevant experience;
- Level of relevant qualifications;
- How closely the individual matches the job description.

The hiring manager should also check if the candidate has requested any reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process. If so, additional guidance should be sought from the HR department.

The hiring manager should also look for the following flags which may indicate a safeguarding concern (this list is not exhaustive):

- Inappropriate motivation for applying;

- The candidate talks about children as equals or deep/special relationships with children;
- Unexplained gaps in the candidate's history.

Once reviewed, the hiring manager should either invite the candidate to a first stage interview or decline their application.

### **First Stage Interview**

The first stage interview can take place online or in person. Prior to the interview, the hiring manager should create a list of questions that will form the basis for all interviews for the position. Questions should be related to the role and designed to elicit information that can be used to determine the candidate's suitability for the position. Questions should not be asked about irrelevant issues such as the applicant's dependants, religious beliefs or marital status. Hiring managers should treat the predetermined questions as a framework for the interview and follow up answers with probing questions to elicit relevant information depending on the response.

At the start of the interview, the hiring manager should introduce themselves and any other interviewer present. They should check on the wellbeing of the candidate and explain what the interview will cover and the length of time it will take.

During the interview, the hiring manager (and any other interviewer) should take notes on the candidate's responses so they can refer to them when determining next steps. The hiring manager should explore any safeguarding concerns with the candidate (such as gaps in employment history) and note the response. If responses are not satisfactory, the hiring manager should discuss this with the DSL or HR department immediately following the interview.

At the end of the interview, the hiring manager should ask the candidate if they have any questions, confirm next steps (when they can expect to hear from us) and thank the candidate for their time.

### **Additional Stages**

The hiring manager may choose to have additional stages of the selection process, if appropriate for the role. Any additional stages must be directly relevant to the role and support good decision making.

Interviews for Development Coaches and other teaching roles are likely to include a short teaching session.

Advice on appropriate additional stages can be sought from the HR Department.

### **Making an Offer**

Once all shortlisted candidates have been interviewed, the hiring manager should contact the successful candidate by phone to verbally offer the position. The verbal offer should cover the following details:

- That the offer is conditional pending all safer recruitment checks;
- The salary to be offered (plus details of any commission);
- Provisional start date;
- That an offer letter confirming the key details will be emailed out shortly.

If the candidate provisionally accepts, the hiring manager should then complete the [Offer to a Candidate Form](#) available on the Apprentify SharePoint. This form notifies the HR department

automatically. Upon receipt, the HR department will create the offer letter and send it to the candidate.

## Onboarding and Pre-employment checks

Once the individual has accepted the offer, the HR Department will begin the pre-employment checks. These are:

1. ID check
2. Right to Work check
3. Enhanced DBS check with children's barred list check (if applicable)
4. Qualifications check
5. Medical Fitness check
6. Reference check

These checks should be completed before the start date of the employee, or as soon as possible thereafter.

### ID Check

The candidate must provide valid photo ID. This is usually a photocard driving licence or valid passport. This ID must be physically checked in person on the first day of employment (or before) and a copy of the ID put on the employee's BambooHR file.

### Right to Work check

Right to work documentation must be checked in person on the first day of employment or before. A copy of all relevant documentation should be made with the checker's name, signature and date of check written on it. This copy should then be uploaded to the employee's file on BambooHR.

Right to work checks can be complicated and statutory processes change from time to time. Up to date information on how to perform a valid right to work check can be found on the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work> Guidance can also be given by the HR department.

### Enhanced DBS check

As an education provider to people aged 16 and above, most of the roles within our organisation involve working with children and young people on a regular basis. As such, we apply for an enhanced DBS with children's barred list check prior to the individual's start date. The DBS application will be managed by a member of the HR Department. The application will be started once the offer has been accepted by the candidate. The certificate will be posted to the applicant's home address; once it has been received, the individual must bring the original certificate into work to be checked by the HR Department. If the DBS certificate is returned with information contained within it, a decision will be made on whether to withdraw the offer of employment or not in line with the 'Recruitment of Ex-offenders' policy.

If the DBS certificate has not been received prior to the applicant's start date, they can begin work, but a risk assessment will need to be completed to identify and manage any risks. Under no circumstances will an individual be allowed to work with children unsupervised until the DBS check has been completed. Further information about such a scenario can be found in the 'Starting employment before the completion of all checks' section below.

## Qualifications Check

We will need to see proof of qualifications that are relevant to the role being offered; this is usually through seeing original certificates. Where certificates are not available, other means of demonstrating participation or completion of the course (such as an email from the course provider) may be sufficient.

## Medical Fitness Check

As stated in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, we are required to assess a candidate's medical fitness to carry out their role prior to them starting work. As part of the onboarding tasks, we will ask the candidate to complete a medical fitness questionnaire prior to their start date. The completed form will then be reviewed by the HR department: any medical information disclosed will be assessed and, where necessary, additional clarification sought from the candidate. If necessary, the HR Department will complete a medical risk assessment to identify and manage any medical risks.

## Reference Check

We will seek references for every appointment within Apprentify Limited. Ideally, we will seek two references, one of which will be from the applicant's most recent employer. The referees will be sent a copy of our reference template, which asks specific questions in relation to the applicant's suitability to work with children. There may be circumstances where it is not possible to obtain two professional references; in such cases, the HR department will decide on the appropriate checks to undertake.

## Single Central Register (SCR)

In line with KCSIE, we are required to keep a record of each employee on the SCR. This will record the dates when each of the checks in the above section were completed. It will also record the employee's name, start date and role title. The SCR will be updated by the HR Department daily. The SCR also contains a notes column where any relevant information pertaining to the pre-employment checks is recorded.

## Starting Employment Before Completion of All Checks

In some cases, there may be some pre-employment checks that are incomplete prior to the employee's start date. In such cases, the HR Department will complete a risk assessment to identify whether the individual can start employment and, if so, what measures should be put in place to reduce the risk of safeguarding issues to an acceptable level. Any individual who is responsible for one or more of the measures will be notified by the HR Department prior to the start date.

Under no circumstances should an employee work in an unsupervised capacity with young people under the age of 18 without a child's barred list check being completed, which is part of the DBS check detailed above. Where an individual is required to be supervised when working with children, the supervisor must be someone who works in regulated activity as defined in KCSIE.

When undertaking a risk assessment, the assessor should consider the following:

- Whether the individual has declared any criminal record, warnings or reprimands, the nature of these and the time that has elapsed since.
- What information is available through the checks that have been completed (e.g. if satisfactory references have been received).

- The nature of the individual's job role.

## Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding in Induction

When a new employee starts in the business, they will undergo an induction process, arranged by the line manager to give them the skills and knowledge required to start their role. A key part of this is ensuring that they have a good understanding of safeguarding and child protection, as well as their role and responsibilities in protecting learners from harm.

All new employees will complete the following training in the first 30 days of their employment:

- Safeguarding for Further Education and Training Settings
- Prevent training
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion training

They must also complete a declaration to confirm that they have read and understood the relevant parts of KCSIE.

They will also take part in a training session with the DSL. This session will reinforce the employee's responsibilities regarding safeguarding and various internal information such as who comprises the Safeguarding Team and how to submit a safeguarding concern.