

# Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure

***“For those agencies whose job it is to protect children and vulnerable people, the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed....”***

**Richard Report, 2004, p12, para 20**

## **Commitment & Purpose**

Malachi Board of recognises that:

- The legal requirements for recruiting employees to work at Malachi Specialist Family Support Services (“MSFSS”) include provisions specifically to protect children from harm, and that following these provisions is an essential part of its duty of care;
- Recruiting the best people to MSFSS is vital for its continued success in providing the highest standards of family support and therapeutic interventions; and
- Not appointing the right people to our roles can have a negative impact on MSFSS’s performance and reputation.

The Board is committed to:

- Creating a safe environment for all children and adults we support by operating safer recruitment practices in line with statutory requirements; and
- Ensuring that throughout our recruitment and selection processes, no applicant is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In the very exceptional cases where we are required to discriminate due to a genuine occupational requirement, this will be approved by the Board before any offer of employment is made.
- Attracting the best possible applicants to MSFSS; and
- Identifying, deterring and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work the families we support.
- Ensuring that all posts offered at MSFSS are made on the basis of merit and abilities .

The purpose of this document is to ensure that we identify, deter and/or minimise people who pose a risk of harm by working at MSFSS and with our families. This means that all employees involved in the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers know the processes, expectations and requirements for safer recruitment,

and follow this Policy & Procedure so as to minimise the risk of harm to children and families.

## Scope

This document applies to all people who carry out work at any location served by MSFSS, whether paid, voluntary, supplied by an agency or under a contract of service.

## Roles & Responsibilities

The **Board** is responsible for ensuring that this document is reviewed and ratified on an annual basis.

The **Managing Director** is responsible for ensuring that the Policy & Procedure is being followed fairly and consistently.

**The Operations Director** is responsible for:

1. Leading and managing on all recruitment and selection and on making final decisions on appointments, subject to approval from the **Managing Director**.
2. Ensuring all staff have access to the latest version of this policy.
3. Ensuring all staff involved in recruitment and selection processes are given opportunities for training;
4. Making sure Induction processes are carried out promptly and thoroughly for all new staff.
5. Maintaining an updated log of Safer Recruitment Trained staff.

## Selection panels

Selection panels for all MSFSS posts will comprise a minimum of three people and should reflect the nature of the post.

Every selection panel will have at least one member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

Individuals should avoid conflicts of interest during the recruitment and selection process by not sitting on a selection panel if they know and/or have a personal connection or relationship with a candidate. Similarly, internal and external applicants may request that the members of a selection panel be changed if they become aware of a potential conflict of interest.

## Safer Recruitment Training

All members of the senior management across MSFSS are required to be safer recruitment trained. In addition, other staff involved in recruiting and selecting staff are encouraged to attend this training internally. Training should be refreshed every 5 years, or sooner, if there are significant changes in statutory guidance or associated legislation.

## **A Safer Recruitment Process**

The importance of safeguarding and protecting children will be promoted as much as possible throughout the recruitment process in order to deter would-be abusers. This means carefully planning all recruitment to ensure that there is enough time to recruit safely.

Although timelines for the appointment of staff may vary depending on the time it takes to receive all of the appropriate pre-employment checks and for the candidate to serve a notice period, no appointment process should cut corners by avoiding the measures described in this document.

### **Step 1 – Prepare Timeline (including assessment methods & selection panel)**

Identifying an appropriate selection panel and selection methods should take place at this stage.

In addition to a face-to-face interview a variety of other selection methods may be used, such as:

- Observation of family support delivery practice within real or simulated settings.
- Service user review
- A presentation
- In-tray exercises (such as written exercises or case studies); and/or
- Psychometric testing

Those responsible for recruiting to a particular post shall determine the appropriate selection methods. They should be relevant and appropriate to the role and be based on the requirements for the particular post as set out in the job description and person specification. Applicants should be informed via the person specification and/or job advert what specific selection methods will be used and at what stage they will be used e.g. shortlisting, interview, and/or additional assessment during interview.

### **Step 2 – Define role: Preparing Job Description and Person Specification**

An up-to-date and tailored job description and person specification is required for all posts. At the start of the recruitment process it is important to define what the duties and responsibilities of the post-holder will be (job description), as well as the qualifications, experience and knowledge needed to perform the role (person specification). Without these documents being in place, writing an effective advert and/or shortlisting will not be possible.

All Job Descriptions will, as a minimum, include:

- Job Title
- Job Purpose
- Line Management details – who will line manage them and will they have line management responsibilities
- Specific responsibilities & duties
- The post-holder's specific responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children that they come into contact with through their job. This is because we all have responsibility for safeguarding in some way.

All Person Specifications will, as a minimum, include:

- Qualifications required
- Professional Registrations (if required)
- The skills, competencies, knowledge and previous experience required
- The requirement to be cleared by the DBS for work with children.

Each requirement in the person specification will be graded as either 'Essential' or 'Desirable'. These grades will be used for shortlisting purposes after the closing date. How these issues will be tested – e.g. application form, interview and/or assessment, will be stated and will vary from post to post.

### **Step 3 – Prepare Advert**

All vacancies will be advertised via appropriate channels to ensure equality of opportunity and to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible. This will normally mean placing an advert externally. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient suitably qualified internal candidates, or employees are at risk of redundancy, vacancies may be advertised internally across MSFSS before an external advert is placed. Any internal recruitment process will follow the steps in this document.

The advert for a vacancy will demonstrate MSFSS's commitment to safer recruitment and vetting procedures in order to act as a deterrent to would-be abusers. All adverts will display the following:

- MSFSS name and logo.
- Post Title
- Clarification that employee will be employed by MSFSS with confirmation of the base location.
- Hours (this should indicate if full or part time)
- Salary range
- Permanent or Fixed Term (if fixed term the duration of the contract should be stated)
- Main responsibilities of the post
- How to apply

- Who to direct informal queries to
- Closing date and interview date (if known)
- Assessment methods and dates (if known)
- Safeguarding Children/DBS Statement:

*“Malachi is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment. The successful applicant will be expected to meet the essential requirements of the person specification and will be subject to pre-employment checks including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and satisfactory references.”*

#### **Step 4 - Shortlisting & Reviewing Application Forms**

Prior to the closing date, an appropriate member of the selection panel shall prepare a shortlisting matrix ready for shortlisting by using some or all of the essential criteria from the relevant person specification.

Recruitment Monitoring Declaration forms and/or details of positive disclosures shall be removed from the application documents before shortlisting takes place to minimise discrimination.

On or around the closing date, a minimum of 2 members of the selection panel will meet or be provided with copies of all application forms so that shortlisting can take place. This will help prevent bias/subjective decisions and mean that the paperwork can be scrutinised more clearly. The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the essential criteria of the person specification for the post as set out in the shortlisting matrix. Those panel members who complete the shortlisting shall score each candidate, ensuring that the criteria are applied consistently. Those who meet all of the relevant essential criteria will form a “long list”.

Once the long list has been agreed, the selection panel should take time to scrutinise/re-read these application forms to identify gaps in employment or other areas that may affect an applicant’s suitability to work with children and young people. These issues should then be raised at interview to ensure that a satisfactory explanation is received.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the shortlisting matrixes should be collated and be kept with the recruitment paperwork.

#### **Step 5 – Inviting Candidates to Interview**

All shortlisted candidates will receive an invitation to interview letter using the model MSFSS template. This re-iterates our commitment to safeguarding and states that each candidate must bring evidence (original documents only) verifying their professional qualifications, identity, right to work in the UK . This

letter also clarifies that references will be sought on all successful candidates, including internal ones.

## **Step 6 – Interview Preparation**

Prior to the interview, the selection panel should have:

- Prepared appropriate competency based questions for the role
- Prepared appropriate questions to test the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people (safeguarding)
- Identified any areas for further probing, e.g. if a criminal record has been declared or if there are gaps in employment and/or discrepancies between references & the application form
- Agreed assessment criteria which reflect the person specification
- Agreed a structure for the interview (including who is asking what)

## **Step 7 – Holding Interview(s)**

A face-to-face interview must take place for all shortlisted applicants to all posts. The use of video conferencing, Skype, Facetime or other similar technologies may be acceptable for this purpose depending on the circumstances e.g. for a candidate based overseas.

All those involved in interviewing must be properly trained. At least one person on the selection panel must have successfully completed accredited safer recruitment training in the last 5 years.

The purpose of the interview is to assess the merits of each applicant against the job description and person specification, and to establish their suitability for a) the post; and b) to work with children and young people and families.

All members of the Selection Panel who were responsible for shortlisting should carry out the interview unless there are exceptional circumstances.

On arrival for interview the original documents requested in the invitation to interview letter will be obtained from each candidate and copied (proof of identity, right to work in the UK and qualifications). Only original documents will be accepted. Essential qualifications required for the post, including those set by statute and/or detailed on the application forms will be sought. Any concerns about missing documents or incomplete paperwork will be notified to the panel immediately. The copies will be verified, initialled and dated and held with the Pre-Employment Checklist pending the outcome of the interviews. If the candidate is successful, they will be placed on their HR file on the day of the interview or as soon as possible afterwards. If the candidate is unsuccessful, then these, along with evidence of identity documents will be securely destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Selection Panel shall conduct the interview in accordance with the previously agreed interview plan. Each member of the Selection Panel shall take a detailed note of the responses. The MSFSS application form allows candidates to inform us of any gaps in their employment history. The Selection Panel must ensure that they investigate any gaps and explore patterns of repeated change in career or employers at interview.

The amount and level of questions should be relevant to the nature of the role. Although a set of common questions relating to the requirements of the post shall be asked of each candidate, their responses may lead to additional questions or clarification from the Selection Panel. Applicants should also be given an opportunity for questions.

The interview process should also allow time for any discrepancy in a candidate's application or references to be scrutinised and clarified. Interviewers will question candidates regarding any employment gaps, criminal record disclosures or cautions, fitness for the role, previous experience, suitability for the post and their motivation to work with children.

The selection panel will be certain they have explored all relevant areas before they make a conditional offer of employment. All interview paperwork (application forms, interview notes, references etc.) should be promptly passed to HR for safekeeping/filing on successful candidate's HR file.

The successful applicant will be contacted by an appropriate member of staff by telephone to advise them of the conditional offer of employment. The Selection Panel shall also promptly inform administration colleagues of the unsuccessful candidates so that they can be notified. Any unsuccessful applicant who requests feedback shall be given prompt feedback in line with the relevant interview notes by a panel member.

## **Step 8 – Pre-employment checks & conditional offers of employment**

Shortly after the interview has been completed and successful candidate(s) chosen, a conditional offer of employment will be made in writing to him or her. The offer will be subject to:

- 1 **References & Employment history** - Receipt of at least two satisfactory written references if they have not already been received (one of which must be their current or most recent employer). This will be the case for internal and external applicants. If a candidate is not currently employed, we will (subject to their consent) check with their most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and reasons for leaving;
- 2 **Right to Work in UK** - Production of proof of eligibility to work in the UK, if not already received. This will be checked against the requirements of the Border Agency. Where Right to Work in the UK cannot be verified, the offer of employment will be immediately withdrawn and the Border Agency notified of the details of the applicant;



- 3 **Verification of applicant's identity** – It is vital that we know who our employees are and have evidence to prove this (preferably from current photographic identification and proof of address dated no older than 3 months ago);
- 4 **Verification of qualifications** - if not already completed on day of interview, successful applicants will be asked to provide evidence of the professional and/or essential qualifications that they have detailed on their application form;
- 5 **Verification of professional status/registration where applicable** - Posts may require evidence of professional registrations as an essential criterion in the person specification;
- 6 **Satisfactory enhanced DBS Check**
- 7 **Overseas Checks** - Any further checks where the applicant has lived or worked outside of the UK for 12 months or more in the last 10 years (including certificate of good conduct or confirmation that the process for obtaining is underway and/or that an appropriate risk assessment has been completed);

## **Step 9 – Employee Induction**

The pre-employment checks above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made if this has been agreed by the MD, and/or an appropriate risk assessment has taken place.

All new employees will be provided with a comprehensive induction programme within 4 weeks of starting employment. The induction programme will include, training on Safeguarding and/or Child Protection Policies (including identity of Designated Safeguarding Leads)

## **Disclosure of Criminal Records**

we encourage candidates to disclose any *unspent* and *spent* convictions during the application stage by including space for this on our application form. Disclosing a criminal background will not be used as a reason not to shortlist a candidate.

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily bar a person from working with children. Successful candidates will be required to complete a DBS application form. Once Enhanced DBS with barred list clearance is verified, any discrepancy in convictions declared on the application form and the DBS clearance will be discussed with the candidate and may lead to the offer of employment being withdrawn with immediate effect, even if the person has commenced work.



## **Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks**

An enhanced DBS check is needed for all staff working with children and vulnerable adults in MSFSS. A standard DBS check is required for all other staff.

DBS certificates will only be issued to the applicant. All applicants must produce the disclosure when requested to do so. The disclosure will be scrutinised to ensure it is authentic and to detect any fraud.

The DBS disclosure number and date of the check must be recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR).

Any applicant who refuses to produce their DBS disclosure will not be able to start work at MSFSS and the conditional offer will be withdrawn as satisfactory checks are not in place. Any volunteer who refuses to produce their disclosure will not be able to volunteer in MSFSS or any of our venues.

### **DBS Update Service**

Some applicants (including volunteers) who apply to MSFSS for a post may have joined and be paying into the DBS Update Service. This can allow future status checks to be carried out by MSFSS to confirm that no new information has been added to their DBS certificate since its issue. This allows for “portability” of a certificate across employers where the same type and level of check is required.

Applicants or volunteers should be asked by HR if they have subscribed to this service (known as “portability”) and they have a current certificate which has been issued within the last 3 months. The expectation is that individuals personally fund this every year if required. Where the applicant or volunteer has subscribed they should provide MSFSS with the original disclosure document to be verified and we will check the online update for any changes.

Information relating to an individual’s criminal record will only be shared with the relevant people to enable MSFSS to make a decision about their suitability to work with children and young people. It will be held for no longer than is necessary and will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and MSFSS’s Data Retention Policy

### **Single Central Record (“SCR”)**

MSFSS will keep and maintain a single central record (SCR) of recruitment and vetting checks.

Relevant checks include:

- 1 Verification of identity (name/date of birth/current address)
- 2 Qualifications (those required to do the job and any professional registrations)
- 3 Disclosure & Barring Service Check
- 4 Overseas criminal records check (anybody who has lived abroad for 12 months or more in the last 10 years)

- 5 Evidence of right to work in the UK
- 6 Date satisfactory pre-employment references received & filed on HR file (must be before start date)

## **Volunteers**

Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in activity. This means that an enhanced DBS check must be obtained.

All volunteers who are new will require an enhanced DBS check. Existing volunteers do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check. However, MSFSS may repeat these checks on a volunteer if they have concerns.

Whilst interviews should be more informal than for paid staff and should very much be a two-way process about selling the volunteer role to them, the interviewer should still probe into their attitudes, and their suitability for the role and to work with MSFSS families.

A basic induction process should be carried out for volunteers, ensuring that they have been trained on the MSFSS Safeguarding Policy and have access to other appropriate policies.

## **Complaints**

Any complaints about the way in which recruitment or selection of MSFSS staff has been conducted, should be addressed in writing to the Managing Director. These will then be investigated in line with good HR practice and a written response provided as soon as reasonably possible.

## **Policy Breach**

Any person who becomes aware that this Policy is not being followed by another employee during the recruitment and selection process is encouraged to inform the Managing Director as soon as reasonably possible.

Any instances of this Policy not being followed will be taken very seriously and will be investigated in line with due process. Depending on the circumstances, this may or may not lead to disciplinary action.

## **Record Keeping & Data Protection**

For unsuccessful candidates, all written records relating to the recruitment and selection process will be kept for six months unless a longer period can be justified by the Managing Director in consultation with HR.

For current employees, all written records will be kept for six years from leaving, unless a longer period can be justified by the Managing Director in consultation with HR e.g. anticipated court and/or employment tribunal case work.

All records will be treated as confidential and kept for no longer than is necessary in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and MSFSS's Data Retention Policy.

## **Review**

In line with Malachi's overall aim to continuously improve its practices, the Supervision Policy will be formally reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually.

Reviewed October 2020

Review date October 2021

Name: Dawn Treasure (Director)

Signature: 

Date: 1st October 2020