# Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure

**Index**


| | Page No. |
|---|---|
| 1. The Aims and Objectives | 2 |
| 2. Legislation | 2 |
| 3. The Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement | 3 |
| 4. The Recruitment Process | 3 |
| 5. Defining the Role - Job Descriptions and Person Specifications | 3 |
| 5.1 Job description | 3 |
| 5.2 Person Specification | 4 |
| 6. Advertising | 4 |
| 7. Application Forms | 4 / 5 |
| 8. Selection Criteria | 5 |
| 8.1 Shortlisting & Invitation to Interview | 5 |
| 8.2 Interviews & Reviews | 5 |
| 8.3 Areas of Potential Concern | 5 / 6 |
| 8.4 Handling Concerns during Recruitment | 6 |
| 9. Employment Checks | 6 |
| 9.1 Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) Security Checks | 6 |
| 9.2 Further Checks | 6 |
| 9.3 Reference Checks | 6 / 7 |
| 9.4 Verification Checks | 7 |
| 10. Offer of Employment | 7 |
| 11. Induction and Probation Period | 7 / 8 |
| 12. Complaints | 8 |
| 13. Recruitment Records and Data Protection | 9 |
| 14. Trustees | 9 |
| Appendix 1 - Procedure | 10 |
| 1. Defining the Role | 10 |
| 2. Advertising the Role | 10 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Application Information Pack | 10 |
| 4. References | 10 |
| 5. Selection Criteria | 10 / 11 |
| 6. Invitation to interview | 11 |
| 7. Interview | 11 |
| 8. Practical test | 11 |
| 9. Checking Identity | 11 |
| 10. Offer of Employment | 12 |
| 11. Post Appointment Induction and Probation | 12 |


## 1. The Aims and Objectives

Sycamore Trust UK is committed to safeguarding, and we are invested in promoting the welfare of vulnerable individuals. It is essential that when Sycamore Trust UK employs staff, uses contractors, or engages volunteers that we adopt a consistent and rigorous approach in the recruitment and selection process.

Safer recruitment is vital for keeping children and adults at risk of harm safe and our aim is to ensure that those recruited are suitable for such an important and responsible role.

At Sycamore Trust UK we aim to deter unsuitable applicants from applying for roles with vulnerable groups and through robust recruitment practices we will identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people, and adults at risk of harm and respond to concerns about suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role.

Sycamore Trust UK will ensure all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes safeguarding.

## 2. Legislation

We endeavour to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly, consistently and in compliance with all relevant legislation.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, latest version) and the following:-

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

## 3. The Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline Sycamore Trust UK's recruitment procedures for all staff, both paid and voluntary, in line with recommended best practice to safeguard all children, young people and adults at risk of harm who use Sycamore Trust UK's services.

Other related policies to refer to: -

- Appraisal & Supervision Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

## 4. The Recruitment Process

The recruitment processes consist of several stages - Defining the Role, Advertising, Application, Selection Criteria, Interviews & Reviews and Employment Checks. This policy will go through each stage outlining key processes to ensure safer recruitment at Sycamore Trust UK. All colleagues involved in recruitment will receive training and development on a regular basis.

Sycamore Trust UK will take a planned and structured approach to the recruitment process. This is to:

- Minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- Ensure that the right person is selected for the role
- Making the process fair
- Making sure records of the process are kept for future reference

Sycamore Trust UK applies the same safeguarding principles to the recruitment of paid staff, volunteers, trustees, sessional workers, apprentices and contractors where they have contact with children, young people or adults at risk.

## 5. Defining the Role - Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

### 5.1. Job description

When a vacancy arises due to an employee leaving or moving to a different role, it cannot be assumed that 'like for like' replacement is required. A review of the job description may highlight the fact that the existing role no longer meets current needs. Therefore, the requirements for any replacement or new role will be analysed prior to drawing up the job description and person specification which define the role.

The job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps. The job description should contain: -

- The post title
- Main purpose of the job
- Who the person reports to
- If the person manages other staff
- The main tasks or duties to be carried out

- General statement relevant to the position, such as requirements relating to equal opportunities and health & safety

### 5.2. Person Specification

The person specification may include: -

- Any qualifications relating to post
- Knowledge, skills and abilities required
- Specific training requirements
- The need for awareness of and commitment to equal opportunities
- Need for commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children & young people and adults at risk of harm
- Need for commitment to promotion of health & safety at work

The person specification should indicate whether the stated criteria are essential or desirable to the role.

## 6. Advertising

The advert will give job role; brief description of job being advertised and closing date by which all applications must be received. It is to include hours, salary and needs to state Sycamore Trust UK's responsibility to safeguarding and the need for enhanced DBS disclosures. Sycamore Trust UK is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, identity checks, right-to-work checks and an enhanced DBS check where appropriate. This acts as a deterrent to unsuitable applicants. Adverts will also state our commitment to being an equal opportunities employer.

The job is to be advertised through all our social media platforms and local networks i.e., CVS and depending on the funding criteria may need to be advertised through external 'paid for' adverts.

## 7. Application Forms

A pre-defined application form will be used for all recruitment including volunteers. CVs in isolation will not be accepted because they are left to the discretion of individual applicants and contain only information that they choose to provide, whereas application forms are employer led. This means detailed information can be collected in a consistent format.

Application forms will include: -

- Personal details including name, current address
- Qualifications & Training
- Full history since leaving school, education, employment and voluntary roles, reasons for leaving and explanation of any gaps
- Duties undertaken and if they have supervised staff
- Key achievements relevant to post they are applying for
- Confirmation that the person has a right to work in the UK
- Request for details of appropriate referees
- DBS disclosure information
- Personal statement

- Explanation if the post is exempt from the provisions of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) Order 1975.
- Signed declaration that all information given is true and that false information could result in rejection of the application or summary dismissal if applicant selected and referral to police or to other regulatory bodies if necessary

## 8. Selection Criteria

### 8.1. Shortlisting & Invitation to Interview

Sycamore Trust UK will assess all applicants in their ability to carry out the role, based on justifiable and objective criteria related to the person specification. To support safer recruitment and ensure fairness in the process the interview panel should take adequate time to consider the applications.

- For consistency
- That the application is fully completed
- Highlight gaps in employment, which can be explored in interview if candidate shortlisted
- Ensure the evidence supplied demonstrates how the applicant meets the criteria set out in person specification & job description

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview. Information will include:

- Details of date, time & venue
- Where and who to report to on arrival
- Details of any documents needed, e.g., proof of identity, documents for the immigration, asylum and nationality check, qualification certificates

### 8.2. Interviews & Reviews

All interviews are conducted with at least two panel members, but preferably three, one of whom will have had safer recruitment training, and one staff member will be elected as chair.

A consistent set of core questions will be asked of all candidates, and at least one interview question will assess the candidate's understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and appropriate professional boundaries.: -

- Focus on requirements to carry out duties of the job
- Explore issues relating to safeguarding
- Identify gaps in employment

### 8.3. Areas of Potential Concern

These are areas that may come out in the interview which would give rise to potential concerns about a person's suitability for the position.

- No understanding of children's needs or expectations
- Inappropriate language when talking about children
- Unclear boundaries
- Vagueness about experiences and unable to give any examples to support what the candidate answers
- Unwilling to work with others
- Inability to explain safeguarding responsibilities

- Attitudes that minimise safeguarding concerns
- Inconsistent information compared with application documents
- Concerns about professional conduct or boundaries
- Reluctance to undergo vetting checks

### 8.4 Handling Concerns during Recruitment

Any safeguarding concerns identified during the recruitment process, including discrepancies in employment history, unsatisfactory references, disclosure of relevant offences, or concerns arising during interview, will be investigated before any appointment decision is made. Sycamore Trust UK reserves the right to withdraw an offer of employment where safeguarding concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

## 9. Employment Checks

### 9.1. Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) Security Checks

Under the 2002 Education Act, a number of people are banned from working with children and the checks Sycamore Trust UK has a legal responsibility to undertake are aimed at identifying individuals that are barred from working with children and young people, or who could pose a potential threat.

Criminal records checks enable you to ensure that people 16 and over have nothing on their record that makes them unsuitable to work or volunteer in roles that have contact with children or adults at risk of harm. They are only valid on the date stated on the certificate but individuals who have a new DBS check can subscribe to the annual update service, which means staff can keep their certificate up to date and take it with them to a new employer.

The level of DBS check required will be determined by the duties of the role and whether it meets the definition of regulated activity. Where appropriate, enhanced DBS checks, including barred list checks, will be undertaken prior to appointment. No employee or volunteer will commence regulated activity until all required pre-employment checks have been completed, unless a documented risk assessment has been undertaken and appropriate supervision arrangements are in place.

Applicants are required to disclose any criminal investigations, cautions, convictions, professional conduct findings, or circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, young people or adults at risk.

### 9.2. Further Checks

Where applicants have lived or worked overseas, Sycamore Trust UK will obtain such additional criminal records information or certificates of good conduct as are available from the relevant country, in addition to DBS checks where applicable.

Right to work in the UK - Sycamore Trust UK has a duty to confirm the right of those they employ to work in the UK and will make the necessary checks to ascertain this.

### 9.3. Reference Checks

As well as an enhanced DBS and any further checks needed. References will be sought and scrutinised before appointment wherever possible and must be received before employment commences.

One of the references must be from the current/most recent employer. The second reference must be someone who has known the individual preferably in a professional capacity, they must have known the candidate for a minimum of 2 years and family members, or partners cannot be named as referees.

References will confirm: -

- Applicants dates of employment
- Job titles
- Whether applicant has been under investigation for any safety and welfare of children and disciplinary actions taken (except where issues from allegations or concerns that were found to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious)

References will be obtained directly from referees and will not be accepted solely through the applicant. Any discrepancies, vague statements or concerns identified within references will be followed up before any appointment is confirmed.

Reference requests will ask whether the applicant has been subject to any safeguarding allegations, disciplinary proceedings relating to children or adults at risk, or concerns regarding professional conduct.

### 9.4 Verification Checks

Sycamore Trust UK will verify the identity of all successful applicants and retain evidence of the checks completed in line with data protection requirements. Checks will consist of:-

- Photographic ID
- Current address
- Qualifications
- Professional registrations (where applicable)

## 10. Offer of Employment

A letter will be sent to the successful candidate/s with an offer of employment dependent on successful DBS and reference checks, setting out basic terms of employment as follows: -

- Job title
- Mutually agreed start date
- Relevant details relating to the position, type of contract/hours

## 11. Induction and Probation Period

Induction is an extension of the recruitment process with the initial induction meeting either taking place prior to starting or on the first day of employment with a monthly review for the first two months, then a three-month probation review meeting. Where staff are either: -

a. Successful in completing their probation period and offered a permanent position.

or

b. The probation period is either extended for an agreed amount of time, with reasons for the extension and improvements/training needed.

or

c. Employment is terminated.

When completing the induction there is a pre-defined Induction Starter Pack which is to be used with all new staff and volunteers. The induction pack will include: -

- Name, Job Title, type of position, who their line manager is and start date
- Emergency contact details including medication, illnesses or disabilities that Sycamore Trust UK should be aware of
- Introduction, including nature and structure of organisation, roles of key people
- Work environment
- Employment conditions including Job descriptions and responsibilities working arrangements etc.
- Pay arrangements request for account details, P45 and National Insurance Number
- Health & Safety policy, Safeguarding policy and covers relevant information about safeguarding and who is Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Security – including Lone Working
- Training required which includes mandatory Safeguarding, Autism Awareness (for all staff & Cyber Security (for office staff)
- Staff information – handbook, core values, mission statement, confidentiality, and data protection
- Dates for monthly reviews and end/continuation of probation period

The induction provided by Sycamore Trust UK covers relevant information about safeguarding and how to identify and raise concerns about the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm.

Certificated training in safeguarding by an accredited trainer forms part of the compulsory training paid staff complete as part of their induction and must be completed within one month of appointment and this is updated annually.

During the probation period and continuing throughout their employment with Sycamore Trust UK all office staff will receive monthly supervisions and yearly appraisals. Once probation period has been successfully completed all activity-based staff will receive termly group supervisions, one yearly individual supervision and a yearly appraisal.

Relevant safeguarding issues are discussed in team meetings and supervisions with specific safeguarding issues dealt with in line with Sycamore Trust UK's Safeguarding policies & procedures.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to inform Sycamore Trust UK immediately of any cautions, convictions, investigations, charges, or circumstances that may impact their suitability to work with children, young people, or adults at risk.

## 12. Complaints

Sycamore Trust UK will always try to provide a professional, fair and efficient recruitment service to all applicants. We recognise that things go wrong occasionally, and you may not be happy with our service, if so, let us know and we will do all we can to put things right.

The complaints process can be summarised in the following steps:

- You identify an issue with the service you received during recruitment.
- You contact the vacancy holder whose details are listed on the job advert with your contact details and a clear description of the recruitment issue
- Sycamore Trust UK will try to resolve your complaint as soon as reasonably possible.

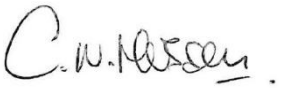
## 13. Recruitment Records and Data Protection

Sycamore Trust UK will maintain appropriate records relating to recruitment, selection and vetting processes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Recruitment records will be retained and securely disposed of in line with Sycamore Trust UK's data retention schedule.

## 14.Trustees

Trustees will be recruited using processes proportionate to their role and responsibilities and will be subject to appropriate due diligence and safeguarding checks.

**Approval of Policy**

Signed:  (Chair of Trustees) Date: 5 October 2026

For And On Behalf Of The Trustees Of Sycamore Trust U.K.

Signed: (Chief Executive Officer) Date: 5 October 2026

This policy will be reviewed in **September 2027** or if legislation should change whichever is sooner.

## Appendix 1 - Procedure

### 1. Defining the Role

A written job description and person specification will be in place for every post. Both documents will clearly set out the skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours and values required for the role, including the attitudes necessary to work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm. The job description will define the purpose, responsibilities and boundaries of the role, including the level of contact with children, young people and adults at risk of harm, and the safeguarding responsibilities associated with the post.

Prior to recruitment, these documents must be reviewed to ensure they remain accurate, relevant and up to date.

### 2. Advertising the Role

Advertisements will be drafted and approved by the relevant line manager(s) and published in accordance with the policy outlined above.

### 3. Application Information Pack

Applicants will be provided with an application information pack which will include:

- Covering letter (with a statement on our safer recruitment process)
- Application Form
- Job Description
- Person Specifications

All applicants must complete Sycamore Trust UK application form. A personal statement which outlines how the applicant meets the person specification should be included. Applicants must sign the declaration at end of application form confirming that the information provided is accurate and complete.

### 4. References

Reference request letters (using Sycamore Trust UK's reference request proforma) will be sent to the two referees identified on the application form. At least one referee must be the applicant's current or most recent employer.

References will be used to verify information provided by the applicant and will seek confirmation of employment history, conduct, disciplinary action, safeguarding concerns, suitability to work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm, and the reason for leaving previous employment where applicable.

References will be obtained prior to appointment wherever possible. Where this is not practical, any offer of employment will remain conditional until satisfactory references have been received, reviewed and verified.

### 5. Selection Criteria

The short-listing process will be based on the person specification and job description and will be applied consistently to all candidates. Shortlisting will be undertaken by at least two members of staff. Always shortlist in order to assess the candidate's ability to carry out the role, based on justifiable and objective criteria. They will also look at identifying gaps,

inconsistencies, or disclosures and will ensure that there is a full education and employment history since leaving school, with any gaps explained. Any qualifications shown on the application form must be supported by certificates. Where practicable, at least one member of the shortlisting panel will also participate in the interview process to ensure consistency.

## 6. Invitation to interview

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview. The invitation will include details of the date, time, location, interview format, and any documentation the candidate is required to bring. Candidates will also be advised that proof of identity and qualifications may be requested.

## 7. Interview

Interviews will normally be conducted face-to-face.

Interview questions will be planned in advance and linked directly to the job description and person specification. The interview process will assess the candidate's skills, experience, values, behaviours and suitability for the role, including their commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

Each candidate will be asked the same questions, treated equally and fairly.

The interview will include questions designed to explore the candidate's attitudes towards safeguarding, professional boundaries and ethical practice. Frequent changes in employment will also be explored. Interviewers should make notes during the interview; these will form part of the evidence used to assess each candidate. Sycamore Trust UK uses a structured scoring system based on the person specification to ensure candidates are assessed fairly and consistently against the same criteria.

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

- Establish and maintain professional boundaries and integrity
- Establish and maintain relationships with children, vulnerable adults at the risk of harm and their families.
- Take action to protect vulnerable clients.

## 8. Practical test

Depending on the position applied for, additional assessment methods may be used as part of the selection process. These may include presentations, role-play exercises, group discussions, practical demonstrations or written exercises designed to assess the candidate's suitability for the role.

For certain positions, candidates may also be invited to observe or voluntarily attend an activity group as part of the recruitment process. Appropriate supervision arrangements will be in place at all times.

## 9. Checking Identity

Each candidate's identity must be verified during the recruitment process in accordance with organisational policy.

## 10. Offer of Employment

A formal offer letter will be issued to the successful candidate. All offers of employment will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of references, DBS checks, identity verification, right-to-work checks, qualification verification (where applicable), and any other checks required by this policy.

The successful candidate will be contacted to make arrangements for completing the DBS application. Employment must not commence until all required checks have been completed and deemed satisfactory by Sycamore Trust UK.

## 11. Post Appointment Induction and Probation

When all necessary checks are completed to the satisfaction of Sycamore Trust UK the Operations Manager will arrange an Induction interview either, prior to the start date or first day of taking up the position for all office-based staff and office-based volunteers. The Youth and Adult Service Manager will arrange inductions for all activity staff and activity volunteers.

Following the induction the new office-based employee will receive a monthly review meeting for the first two months, then a three-month probation review meeting. At the end of the probation period, employment will either be confirmed, the probation period extended with agreed objectives and support measures, or employment terminated in accordance with organisational procedures.

The induction process will include safeguarding training, familiarisation with relevant policies and procedures, reporting processes, professional boundaries, and the responsibilities associated with safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

During the probation period and continuing throughout their employment with Sycamore Trust UK all office-based staff will receive monthly supervisions and a yearly appraisal. All activity-based staff will receive termly group supervisions and a yearly individual supervision and annual appraisal.