First Steps (Bath)

STAFF EMPLOYMENT/ SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

First Steps (Bath) assesses the suitability of staff appointments in the context of our commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and in line with B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership
safer recruitment principles. We recruit, appoint and employ staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and safer recruitment guidance, ensuring effective procedures are in place to attract, select and retain high quality applicants. In accordance with our Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination policy, we aim to ensure that no job applicant or worker receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, faith, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, family circumstance, political belief, social background, sexual orientation, or disability.

Selection criteria and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are assessed on the basis of their suitability to work with children and their relevant merits and abilities. All workers will be given equal opportunity and access to training to enable them to progress both within and outside First Steps (Bath).

Employment Procedure

Authorisation

Before a vacancy can be filled or a new post created, the need for it and the available budget must be agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Trustees.

Advertising

Unless financial or other circumstances require a restriction to internal advertising only, posts should be advertised widely through known channels – e.g. on the B&NES and Job Centre websites, relevant media where appropriate, in addition to our own website, social media and notice boards. The advert will include an outline of the post and the skills and qualities required, a statement confirming our commitment to safeguarding children, the details of pay and hours, the closing date (and where possible the interview date) and a contact for the application pack which should include the job description, person specification, application form, and Safeguarding Policy Statement, and new employer self disclosure form. Prospective candidates must be advised that CVs will not be accepted.

Shortlisting

All applications received by the closing date will be shortlisted against the person specification for the post by the recruiting manager and at least one other panel member. Any application declaring convictions, cautions or investigations must be risk assessed in discussion with the Chief Executive or Lead Trustee for Safeguarding at the shortlisting stage. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview; and prior to interview a verbal reference will be taken. For the interview, candidates will be asked to bring evidence of their identity and qualifications with them, character references or references from relatives, friends or colleagues should not be considered as acceptable. The application form will establish the right to work in the united Kingdom and relevant documents verified at interview. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified

Interviewing

Prospective staff members have an interview before a panel of senior staff. At least one panel member must have successfully completed a 'Recruiting Safely' course. The panel may also include parents and/or Trustees. The interview process may also involve the assessment of a task related to the post applied for. Questions will be drawn up in advance to test areas of the specification. Interviews for all posts within First Steps must include at least one question to test knowledge, attitudes and experience of safeguarding children – a positive response to the question(s) is required. If the application pack includes offences, cautions or investigations a judgement will be made about suitability considering the nature of the offence, when it took place and frequency of offence. Unexplained gaps in the employment history, will be questioned and explanations recorded. Interviewers will score their candidates separately, then compare scores and agree on the successful candidate. All candidates will be informed of the outcome of their interview, and offered the opportunity of feedback.

References and checks

At least 2 references (one of which must be from their current or most recent employer), proof of qualifications, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced clearance and proof of identity and address is required for each successful candidate before an appointment offer is made. References will be taken up in writing and at least one must be checked verbally. If the preferred candidate or a member of their household has any offences, cautions or investigations, a risk assessment form must be completed and signed off by the Chief Executive in discussion with the Chair of Trustees (and by the Local Authority contract manager if applicable) and LADO before an offer of appointment is made. For Nursery appointments Ofsted will be informed. Appointments will also complete a health declaration form.

Appointment

Successful candidates will normally be appointed at the bottom of the salary scale for their post, unless they have significant relevant experience and have been working at a higher salary level. Following checks, the candidates will be sent an email containing their contract appointment letter and a copy of First Steps (Bath)'s Code of Conduct and Terms and Conditions of Employment. A signed copy of the contract letter acknowledging receipt of these must be returned **before** their employment starts.

Induction and Probationary Period

The line manager for the new employee will plan their induction programme, and ensure that they are provided with support and regular (at least monthly) one-to one supervision. This induction will include an introduction to child protection procedures and awareness of the process for management of allegations, whistle blowing process and the document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. Any performance issues that arise must be shared quickly and openly, together with agreed actions to address these, in line with the improving work performance policy and procedure. If any concerns arise in relation to the employee's suitability to work with children, the Safeguarding Procedure must be followed. When the employee has completed three months employment (six months for staff graded senior manager or above), the line manager should carry out a review and, if satisfactory, notify them in writing of their confirmation in post. If an employee appears not to be suitable to be confirmed in post, the Chief Executive must be informed and involved at the earliest opportunity, as appropriate procedures will need to be put in place.

Staff are expected to complete a safeguarding disclosure form and update this as part of the annual appraisal process.

Staff development

Staff are encouraged to progress and develop while working for First Steps (Bath). Details of their entitlement to training and development are set out in our Terms and Conditions of Employment. All staff are required to attend safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their role, within 6 months of their appointment; followed by refresher training at least once every three years. Staff who are working towards a recognised, relevant qualification may be granted some paid time to attend college, and where available national or local government funding permits, a contribution may be made towards their course fees. These matters are covered in the separate Staff Training and Development policy and procedure.

Links to other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Equal Opportunities and anti discrimination policy
- Staff Training & Development
- Improving Performance Policy and Procedure
- Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure

Appendix 1

Please refer to P:\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\Staff Handbook\Section 6 Recruitment Process - Appendix to 6h

Revised and updated policy approved by the Board of Trustees September 2011

Reviewed by SMT September 2016
Reviewed by Trustees October 2017
Reviewed by SMT September 2018
Reviewed by SMT September 2019
Reviewed by SMT September 2020
Reviewed by SMT July 2021EYFS reforms