



ESS SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Effective for employees, students, management and volunteers on or after 1 September 2023

Date of next Review: September 2026

Please Note: A formal, full review of this document will take place on a 3-yearly basis. However, in the interim, the document will be updated as necessary to remain current with internal organisation updates and any statutory legislation and/or significant Government guidance updates on the subject.



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Policy Introduction

ESS Education and Support Services aim to recruit and retain the best staff, in line with the Department for Education's Safer Recruitment Guidelines (contained within [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)), to enable effective delivery of the ESS Business Plan. ESS's policy is to ensure that recruitment and selection decisions are based on the ability of the applicant to: meet the requirements of the job description, person specification and any other relevant criteria. All applicants and employees will be treated fairly and according to this policy and procedure, and ESS's associated Equality and Diversity policies etc. ESS are committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality; whilst keeping our Learners (children, young people and adults, including vulnerable adults) safe.

Scope

This Policy and the associated procedures and the good practice contained therein, apply to all employed and freelance appointments.

Procedures

1. Statutory Requirements

1.1 Current employment law imposes obligations on employers not to discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic; age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. ESS Education and Support Services is committed to taking a positive and pro-active approach to diversity and equality which extends beyond the statutory obligations. There is also an additional requirement to ensure that we comply with UK immigration rules and procedures.

1.2 ESS Education and Support Services is committed to following Safer Recruitment best practice as laid out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)

1.3 ESS will also take into account the practical guidance and recommendations of non-statutory codes of practice.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 HR personnel will provide advice, guidance and support to recruiting teams/managers so that:

- a) Job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements are drafted in such a way as to make clear the requirements of job vacancies.

- b) ESS's Equality and Diversity & Recruitment Policy and the ESS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure is a feature of all recruitment advertising.
- c) Staff involved in recruitment and selection are aware of their role and responsibilities in this area.
- d) All staff involved in recruitment will have received Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training prior to being involved with the recruitment process.

2.2 HR personnel will monitor applications by equalities criteria.

2.3 HR and other assigned managers and personnel will organise training and development to support effective and safer recruitment and selection; including relevant equality and Diversity legislation training/updates and Safer Recruitment training.

2.4 Heads of Department have overarching responsibility for the appointment of staff in their area; for ensuring that these procedures are followed, and that unfair discrimination does not occur

2.5 All staff involved in recruitment and selection have a responsibility to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to uphold ESS's core values.

3. Criminal Convictions

3.1 ESS Education and Support Services will utilise the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), to undertake relevant checks on applicants, as appropriate, in line with the requirements for the post for which an applicant is applying. Any such checks will be carried out in line with appropriate guidance and legislation including:

- a) [Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975.docx \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- b) DBS guidance for Child workforce updated Jan 2022: [Child workforce guide v10 0 28052019.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and
- c) DBS guidance for Adult workforce updated Jan 2022 [Adult Workforce Guide v11.0 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

3.2 The requirement for DBS checks will be clearly stated in the advertising/recruitment documentation for the vacancy.

3.3 Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. This self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records.

4. The Safer Recruitment Process

4.1 The safer recruitment process (which runs in line with Safer recruitment best practice as per Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance) is often the first experience an individual has of ESS Education and Support Services and it is important that it is a positive one. These procedures are designed to:

- a) create a positive image to applicants who may be future employees, learners or customers;
- b) give a clear understanding of our work and what will be expected of them as employees;
- c) enhance the quality of the candidate pool;
- d) reduce the risk of a bad selection decision.

4.2 An essential component of the recruitment process is the literature prepared for candidates, such as job description, person specification and further details.

5. First Step (before recruitment process is initiated)

5.1 If an employee leaves, or additional staff resources are required first check with the CEO, COO, Head of Department and/or Head of HR that there is 'in principle' support for filling the vacancy and that budget is available.

5.2 The CEO may determine the need for new or replacement posts based on the current and future requirements of the Company. He/she may authorise moving to the next stage of the recruitment process dependent on the following:

- a) The post fits ESS Education and Support Services HR frameworks
- b) A decision is made on whether the post will be Freelance or Employed basis
- c) A budget can be identified/approved to cover the costs involved.
- d) The grade/pay scale has been determined in accordance with ESS's procedures.

5.3 The Chief Executive Officer must initially discuss and agree budget availability prior to taking any further actions to fill the vacancy.

5.4 If the job is new, or the duties of the job have changed significantly over time, it may be necessary for the job grading to be reviewed; the outcome may impact on the budget required. Advice on this should be sought from HR.

5.5 Recruiting managers are encouraged to discuss their recruitment plans with HR personnel, so that the appropriate level of guidance and support can be provided to ensure that the process runs smoothly. Consideration needs to be given at this stage to the shape and content of the recruitment activity, appropriate to the vacancy.

5.6 If selection tools, other than an interview, are planned: these should be directly related to the requirements of the job; should be carefully selected; professionally

designed and properly applied to ensure that there is no bias in the selection process. Further advice can be obtained from the HR Manager and team.

6. Getting Started

6.1 Confirming Approval: Vacancies normally have to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Trustees

6.2 Preparing for advertising: The Departmental Head and allocated personnel, including HR as appropriate, will be tasked with creation of relevant recruitment documents (Job description, advert wordings, vacancy details e.g. new or replacement post, including budget etc.). Please see Section 7, below, for further details.

6.3 Preparing for short-listing, interviewing and referencing

- Before proceeding with advertising the post, a decision should be reached/agreed in relation to:
 - ✧ Whether references will be requested before or after interview
 - ✧ Whether a full application or CV will be required prior to sifting stage.
 - ✧ The format for sifting to reach a short-list for interview
 - ✧ Identification of who will be involved in the Interview Panel
 - ✧ Any further activities required as part of the application process (e.g. skills scans/testing etc.)

6.4 Advertising: Allocated personnel will be tasked with advertising the role/vacancy , person specification to the Company recruitment officer, who will collate this for submission to advertisers. Services with relevant vacancy details including budget, whether the post is new or a replacement, full or part time, location etc.

7. Job Description

7.1 The job description:

- Provides a 'snapshot' of the job at a given time;
- Defines the job purpose and principal accountabilities of the job;
- Defines expectations in relation to Safeguarding responsibilities and need for DBS vetting including:
 - What extent the role will involve contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
 - ESS's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - Confirmation that applicants will undergo relevant Safeguarding checks
 - The Safeguarding responsibilities of the post
- Indicates where the job sits within the organisational structure;

- Outlines reporting relationships;
- Changes as the job develops

7.1.2 The job description must be prepared by an experienced/relevant allocated member of staff, in the standard format. Advice on production of job descriptions can be obtained from the HR Team.

Where there is an existing job description for the vacancy, this will need to be reviewed, and updated where necessary and set out in the latest version of the appropriate standard template.

7.2 Person Specification

7.2.1 Person specifications are designed to identify the qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills/competencies, and personal qualities required of the successful candidate to ensure the job is carried out effectively.

7.2.2 It is crucial to the recruitment process that it is clear and precise, since it outlines the criteria by which candidates will be shortlisted and selected. It is important to keep the person specification succinct. If candidates are not going to be assessed against a criterion during the recruitment process, then it shouldn't be included.

7.2.3 The person specification should make clear what is essential and what is desirable. Essential criteria are necessary pre-requisites whilst desirable criteria are those which would be advantageous additional skills/knowledge for the candidate to possess. The person specification, with the job description, is used to provide a realistic basis for an advertisement. Time spent at this stage will help at subsequent stages of the process.

7.2.4 The Person specification should also make clear if a skills scan/test (or similar) will be part of the recruitment process.

7.2.5 Particular care must be taken when devising the criteria used in person specifications, to ensure that these do not unlawfully discriminate against particular groups of people either directly or indirectly.

7.2.6 Where a satisfactory DBS check is required for the post this should be specified as an essential requirement

7.3 Additional Information/Further Details for Candidates

7.3.1 The Departmental Manager may provide further information, to supplement the job description and person specification e.g. giving the job context.

7.4 Recruitment Advertisement

7.4.1 The recruitment advertisement should be designed in line with the Job Description and Person Specification above, with a focus on Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment guidelines.

7.4.2 Ultimately the Advert, once posted, should:

- Provide potential candidates with a snap shot of the vacancy/job role and any particular/additional activities which will be arranged as part of the application process (e.g. Skills scans etc.) ;
- Enable easy identification of those applicants whose experience, qualifications etc match the requirements of the job including:
 - What extent the role will involve contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
 - ESS's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - Confirmation that applicants will undergo relevant Safeguarding checks
 - The Safeguarding responsibilities of the post
- Quickly eliminate those potential applicants who do not match the requirements;
- Convey a positive image of ESS Education and Support Services as an 'employer of choice';

7.4.3 The Departmental Manager is responsible for providing a draft advertisement, working with HR and other allocated personnel to do so. It should be succinct and interesting, aiming to have maximum impact with a minimum of text.

7.4.4 All adverts will include one of a selection of regularly reviewed and updated standard short generic 'openers'. These can be obtained from previous adverts or the CEO.

7.4.5 Layout of the Advert should be as follows:

- Firstly the items for which most Applicants will initially scan the advert:
 - Job Title
 - Salary
 - Location
- This information should be followed by:

- The job (the main thrust of what the jobholder will be doing or be expected to achieve)
- Key requirements - what the candidate needs to do the job e.g. essential and desirable qualifications, experience, background, personal qualities
- The HR team/Advertising personnel will then add:
 - A link to the Application Form(s)
 - Standard text such as the closing date and equality statement

7.4.6 All posts should normally be advertised and actively promoted across a range of avenues (formal Job sites, social media on the ESS Website etc.) for a minimum of two weeks to attract the best pool of candidates.

8. The Application Form and Pack and use of CVs

8.1 The Application Form issued to applicants will include a request for the following:

- Personal details, current and former names, current address and National Insurance Number (NINO)
- Details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- Full employment history (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
- Qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
- Details of referees/references (see Section 13 References, below)
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

8.2 CVs can only be accepted, alongside an application form, as it has insufficient detail as a stand alone document.

8.3 If the role/vacancy relates/is likely to include any element of engaging in regulated activity relevant to children: Either in the application, or elsewhere in the information provided, a statement should be included to state that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

8.4 As part of the Application Pack, provided to applicants, ESS Education and Support Services will provide the latest version of the ESS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Short-listing

9.1 Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people (nominated personnel selected from available Safer Recruitment trained personnel as appropriate); one of whom will normally be the Head of Department.

9.2 The criteria set at the beginning of the recruitment process, in the person specification, will be used to assess all candidates as objectively as possible

9.3 Shortlisting will include reviewing applications for any inconsistencies (gaps in employment and any potential concerns areas) preparatory to the interviews (so that these can be addressed/explored during the interviews).

9.4 Internal applicants 'at risk' of redundancy (i.e. an employee whose role is being discontinued in the organisation) in their existing post, should be short-listed, if they meet most of the essential criteria. The likely duration and cost of staff training and development will need to be taken into account in deciding whether the job would be suitable alternative employment for an 'at risk' applicant.

9.5 Shortlisted candidates should be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children (see Section 3 Criminal Convictions) and to sign a declaration to confirm that the information they are sharing is true (Section 218 p53-54 KCSIE 2022)

10. Selection Administration

10.1 References can be obtained after successful interview, but prior to offering employment.

10.2 Where references are to be requested prior to interview, a longer lead in time must be allowed to enable referees reasonable time to respond prior to interview. At least '12 working days' notice should be given to HR Services.

10.3 For internal appointments within the same Department further references will not normally be required.

11. The Interview

11.1 The aim of the interview is to select the best candidate for the job. It is a two-way process during which the details of the job can be discussed and the candidate's suitability assessed.

11.2 Where the candidate's application reveals any unexplained gaps in employment or inconsistencies, these should be explored with the candidate at interview

11.3 During the interview ESS interviewers will explore the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post.

11.4 Candidates will have been asked to bring with them to the interview their original qualification certificates and proof of identity and Right to Work in the UK (plus a copy, where possible), which ESS personnel will verify against the originals and upload onto the Recruitment system.

11.5 The purpose of collecting the above documents on the interview day is to ensure that any offer of employment may be expedited. If the documents are not collected or are not available, HR personnel will need to make alternative arrangements, which may delay any formal offer being made.

11.6 The Chair of the panel must identify administrative support from available staff members, to meet and greet candidates on the day of the interview and to collect and photocopy the appropriate documentation. HR and the Head of Department will discuss to assign an appropriate Chair for the interview panel, who will be provided with a checklist of required documentation in an interview pack. Guidance on appropriate documentation to be checked as confirmation of the right to work in the UK can be obtained from HR or the appropriate Head of Department. Right to work documents should also be verified and signed by the interviewer or the administrator handing the documents, to confirm that the originals have been seen.

11.7 All those involved in the Recruitment Process must have successfully undertaken Safeguarding Safer Recruitment training, so that during the interview processes, candidates can be effectively vetted in relation to their views and engagement in Safeguarding and Prevent good practice

12. Chair's and HR's Actions after Interview

12.1 Following interviews, the Head of Department or CEO may make a verbal conditional offer of appointment to the successful candidate. It must be made clear that the offer is subject to completion of our pre-employment checks as follows:

- Receipt of satisfactory references
- Evidence of essential qualifications (if not already supplied)
- Confirmation of right to work in the UK (if not already supplied)
- Receipt of acceptable DBS screening results (where the post requires this)

12.2 Verified Right to Work alongside copied of verified essential qualifications will be uploaded to the Recruitment Management system and HR advised accordingly, so that onboarding can be expedited.

12.3 HR will make arrangements, with the successful candidate for a DBS check to be undertaken, where this is needed for the role.

12.4 HR will also liaise with the candidate in relation to obtaining references (i.e. if a referee does not respond to timescale or any question arises, during the referencing process).

12.5 It is made clear to the candidate, by the Head of Department or CEO, that they should not resign their current position and that ESS Education and Support Services will only proceed to a formal offer of employment if all of the above pre-employment checks are satisfactory.

12.6 Although ESS may explore the successful candidate's availability to start work e.g. notice period, no agreement in relation to a potential start date will be made until a formal offer of employment is made.

12.7 The successful candidate will not be allowed to start work in advance of all the pre-employment vetting checks requirements being met. Please note full pre-employment vetting checks will be required for both employed and Freelance candidates, before they start delivering services to ESS Education and Support Services.

12.8 Any unsuccessful internal candidates must be contacted by the nominated member of staff to confirm the decision and provide feedback. This should be by telephone or by face-to-face. Once they have been informed please update HR Services

12.9 The unsuccessful candidate documents should be disposed of in confidential shredding

12.10 Unsuccessful external candidates will be informed of the outcome by email issued usually within 5 working days of receipt of the interview outcome.

12.11 Confirmation of the conditional offer of employment will be sent to the successful candidate by the Head of Department or HR, normally within 3 working days of the interview.

12.12 Upon successful completion of the pre-employment vetting checks HR will notify the Head of Department and/or CEO and work with the Manager and the successful candidate to issue the formal offer of employment and agree a start date.

13. References (cross reference with KCSIE Employment history and references)

13.1 ESS Education and Support Services seeks references to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions.

13.2 ESS has made an informed decision to request references after interview, rather than before interview. This is to enable ESS to more quickly identify suitable

candidates. References are obtained and any further queries/checks made as a result of these, before any offer of employment is made to the successful candidate.

13.3 To ensure ESS obtain accurate and proper references, the following KCSIE guidance will be followed. ESS will:

- Not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, ESS will confirm the reference with the headteacher/principle, to ensure it is accurate in respect of any disciplinary investigations).
- Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer
- Always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- Contact referees to clarify content, where the information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate.
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post and
- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

14. Pre-Appointment/Employment Vetting Checks

14.1 These checks do not only relate to those whose roles will involve working with children, under The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 safeguarding provisions were extended to providers of post 16 Education: 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers. ESS Education and Support Services is pleased to extend the Safer Recruitment best practice across the whole organisation including Post-18 training delivery.

14.2 ESS Education and Support Services will therefore not make any formal offer of appointment/ employments until ESS has undertaken/obtained the following:

- Verification of a candidate's identity (Birth certificate or Passport and formal change of name evidence where their name has changed since birth).
- Enhanced DBS Check (including barred list information, for those who will be/are engaged in regulated activity with children)
- Verification of a candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (e.g., via relevant questions about disability and health in order

to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role; whilst ensure ESS continues to comply with equality and diversity best practice).

- Verification of the person's right to work in the UK (including EU Nationals); in line with the [Right to Work in the UK guidance](#).
- Any further checks required if the person has lived or worked outside the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications, as appropriate (utilising the Teaching Regulation Agency's Employer Access Service, when ESS uses/takes on fully qualified teaching staff, to verify award or qualified teacher status and the completion of teacher induction or probation)
- Checks that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the secretary of State.

15. Salary

15.1 On appointment the successful candidate will normally be placed on the first point of the advertised salary range for the job.

15.2 There may be situations where it is appropriate for the successful candidate to be placed on a higher salary point e.g. job related experience. In such cases it will be for the Director to decide the appropriate starting salary and put forward the appropriate justification

16. Formal Offer of Employment

16.1 It is the Head of Department or CEO's responsibility, working with HR, to decide whether references received are satisfactory and whether a formal offer of employment should be made.

16.2 Advice should be sought if there are any concerns about the content of references or in the event that there are omissions on the reference. References should always be checked to ensure that:

- questions have been answered unambiguously – omissions should be followed up
- employment dates match those listed on the application form – discrepancies should be followed up and clarified

16.3 The Head of Department and/or CEO will then agree a start date with the candidate and arrangements for the first day of work and then forward these details to HR Services by e-mail.

16.4 Once HR Services have been notified by the CEO that a formal offer of employment can be made, paperwork (letter, contract etc.) will be sent to the candidate within 3 working days.

17. Induction

17.1 Once an appointment is made, the Head of Department will ensure practical arrangements for the new member of staff are organised before their arrival such as their workspace.

17.2 They will also ensure arrangements are made for the formal Induction programme to be delivered to the new member of staff in readiness on their first day. The Induction programme includes standard information/activities which are common to all staff within the department, plus elements which are specific to the role.

17.3 All new starters will be given the Employee Handbook

18. Review of Policy & Procedure

18.1 This procedure is subject to review in the light of relevant developments in legislation and employment practice. We reserve the right to amend the procedure from time to time at our discretion.

19. Related Policies, Procedures and Documents

- ESS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ESS Equality and Diversity & Recruitment Policy
- Annex A - Keeping Children Safe in Education (Statutory note for Schools and Colleges)