

Safer recruitment policy

1. Introduction

Ensuring the safety of all those involved in or impacted by our work is of paramount importance to Blaggrave. A robust safer recruitment process not only protects vulnerable individuals but also safeguards the reputation and credibility of the Trust. Blaggrave recognises that our staff (employees, facilitators, consultants) are our greatest resource. We take our responsibilities for ensuring that any individual that represents the Trust is not just appropriately experienced and qualified but also suitable to work with adults at risk and / or in a position of power.

This Safer Recruitment Policy sets out this commitment which includes a robust approach to advertisement and applications to ensure our safeguarding commitment is clearly communicated, interviews which explore behaviours and attitudes, criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for eligible roles, a self-declaration form, the take up of references and verifying the applicant's right to work documentation.

2. Our approach to disclosure and barring checks

Blaggrave actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates. Blaggrave recognises the contribution that people with different backgrounds can make as employees and volunteers and welcome applications from those with a criminal record. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

We acknowledge that certain groups may be disproportionately affected by criminal records check, particularly the DBS check process, and we are mindful of avoiding any unnecessary barriers that could unfairly disadvantage individuals. Our intention is not to discriminate but to ensure the safety of all those impacted by the work of Blaggrave, while also respecting the rights and dignity of all candidates.

We are dedicated to ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly and equitably throughout the process. We never ask for criminal record details at the application stage, and all recruitment packs and job adverts contain a statement informing candidates whether a DBS check will be undertaken for that role.

When requesting a DBS check, we do so with careful consideration and only when the role meets the eligibility criteria for such checks. We understand that sharing personal information, including past convictions or cautions, can be a sensitive matter. Any information disclosed as part of the DBS check will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and respect, according to our data protection policy, and data protection legislation. Our commitment to safeguarding extends to handling this information

securely and ensuring that it is only accessed by authorized personnel who are directly involved in the recruitment process.

We encourage applicants to openly discuss any concerns or questions they may have about the process with Valeria Tavares, Designated Safeguarding Lead, at valeria@blagravetrust.org, or Eli Manderson Evans, CEO, at eli@blagravetrust.org. Blaggrave is committed to providing clear explanations of why a DBS check is required for a particular role and how the information will be used during the recruitment process.

3. Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to make Blaggrave's recruitment procedures clear for all current and potential staff, including employees and consultants, temporary or permanent, to ensure we recruit suitable and appropriate people and do no harm as part of our work.

The policy is included as part of the Trust's application pack for any position and, as such, is given to all applicants along with a detailed job description, person specification, and equal opportunities monitoring form.

Recruitment and the checks that are undertaken as part of this process are the organisation's first opportunity to make robust efforts to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with adults at risk and / or in a position of power. The recruitment processes consist of several stages:

- Defining the role
- Advertising
- Shortlisting
- Selection process
- Conditional offer
- Background & right to work checks
- Appointment
- Induction

Throughout the process, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants.

Applicants will not be excluded from being considered for a position based upon any characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010) which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Positions will be offered based on competency, experience and qualifications, supported by an informed assessment of any potential risks indicated by information gathered during the recruitment process (references, interviews, criminal records checks, gaps in employment history, etc).

As part of any recruitment process, Blaggrave collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. We are committed to being transparent about how we collect and use that data and to meeting our data protection obligations. For more information about how Blaggrave will process your data refer to the Data Protection Policy.

This policy will go through each stage outlining key processes to ensure safer recruitment at Blaggrave. All colleagues involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training and development on a regular basis.

4. Conclusion

Our commitment to safer recruitment and the use of background checks, including DBS checks, reflects our dedication to creating a safe environment for all. We aim to balance the need for safety with the principles of fairness, respect, and inclusivity. We encourage applicants to engage with the process openly and without fear, knowing that their information will be handled confidentially and that decisions will be made with sensitivity and careful consideration of their individual circumstances. For more information, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Valeria Tavares at valeria@blagravetrust.org.