



STARFISH AP
The Starfish Way
Safer Recruitment Policy
Academic Year 2026–2027

Item	Details
Document Title	Safer Recruitment Policy
Organisation	Starfish Alternative Provision
Academic Year	2026–2027
Version	1
Policy Owner	Chloe Fox – Director & Head of Provision
Applies To	All employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, trustees, governors, consultants and any adults working with or on behalf of The Starfish Hub
Date Approved	Sep 2026
Review Date	Sep 2027
Next Review	Annually, or sooner following legislative or organisational

Document Purpose

This policy sets out The Starfish Hub's commitment to safer recruitment and the procedures followed when recruiting, selecting and appointing individuals to work with children and young people.

At The Starfish Hub, safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult. The safety and wellbeing of children begins long before a child enters a classroom, attends a session or builds a relationship with a member of staff. It begins with ensuring that the adults we recruit are suitable, trustworthy, competent and committed to safeguarding children.

We are committed to recruiting individuals who share our values, demonstrate professional integrity and are capable of contributing positively to a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment.

This policy outlines the measures we take to deter, identify and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people whilst ensuring recruitment processes remain fair, transparent and compliant with statutory requirements.

This policy should be read alongside The Starfish Hub's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy and the wider policies forming part of The Starfish Way Governance & Practice Framework.

The Starfish Way

At The Starfish Hub, we believe that safeguarding begins with the adults we choose to work alongside. Children deserve adults who are safe, compassionate, emotionally available and professionally accountable.

Many of the young people attending The Starfish Hub have experienced disrupted relationships, adversity, trauma or unmet needs. The adults around them play a critical role in helping them rebuild trust, develop resilience and experience belonging.

For this reason, recruitment decisions are not based solely upon qualifications and experience. We also consider values, attitudes, safeguarding awareness and an individual's ability to contribute positively to our culture.

The Starfish Way is built upon eight guiding principles:

Safety

Every recruitment decision must prioritise the welfare of children.

Trust

Children and families should have confidence in the adults supporting them.

Attunement

We seek individuals who understand and respond sensitively to the needs of others.

Regulation

We recruit professionals who can maintain calm, reflective and consistent practice.

Flexibility

We value individuals who can adapt to the diverse needs of children and families.

Inclusion

Recruitment processes will be fair, accessible and inclusive.

Support

We seek professionals who understand the value of collaborative working.

Humanity

Relationships, compassion and integrity sit at the heart of effective practice.

When recruiting, we do not simply ask:

"Can this person do the job?"

We also ask:

"Can this person be trusted to safeguard children, uphold our values and contribute positively to our culture?"

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Permanent employees.
- Temporary employees.
- Agency staff.
- Volunteers.
- Contractors.
- Consultants.
- Apprentices.
- Placement students.
- Trustees or governors where applicable.
- Any adult undertaking regulated activity on behalf of The Starfish Hub.

Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Edition).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Current Edition).
- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Education Act 2002.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Police Act 1997.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

The Starfish Hub will review this policy whenever legislation or statutory guidance changes.

Recruitment Principles

The Starfish Hub is committed to ensuring that recruitment processes:

- Prioritise safeguarding.

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Are transparent and fair.
- Assess suitability to work with children.
- Identify and deter unsuitable candidates.
- Encourage professional curiosity.
- Comply with statutory requirements.
- Reflect The Starfish Way values.

Safeguarding considerations will remain central throughout every stage of recruitment.

Roles and Responsibilities

Director and Head of Provision

The Director and Head of Provision is responsible for:

- Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are implemented.
- Ensuring appropriate checks are completed.
- Maintaining recruitment records.
- Maintaining the Single Central Record.
- Ensuring staff receive safeguarding induction.
- Monitoring compliance with statutory guidance.

Recruiting Managers

Recruiting managers will:

- Follow safer recruitment procedures.
- Assess safeguarding suitability.
- Conduct interviews appropriately.
- Verify documentation.
- Escalate concerns where necessary.

Interview Panel Members

Interview panel members are responsible for:

- Assessing suitability fairly and consistently.
- Exploring safeguarding attitudes and behaviours.
- Identifying potential concerns.
- Recording decisions appropriately.

Where possible, at least one member of the interview panel will have completed recognised safer recruitment training.

Planning and Advertising

All recruitment activity will begin with a clear understanding of the role and safeguarding responsibilities involved.

Job descriptions and person specifications will:

- Define responsibilities clearly.
- Identify safeguarding expectations.
- Outline qualifications and experience required.
- Reflect The Starfish Hub's values.

All recruitment materials will include a safeguarding statement explaining that:

The Starfish Hub is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointments are subject to satisfactory safeguarding checks, including enhanced DBS clearance where appropriate.

Applications

Applicants will be required to complete an application process that enables The Starfish Hub to assess suitability for the role.

Applications should include:

- Full employment history.
- Education and qualifications.
- Relevant experience.
- References.
- Explanations for gaps in employment where applicable.

Curriculum Vitae (CVs) may be accepted as supporting information but will not replace appropriate recruitment checks.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be undertaken objectively against the person specification. Particular attention will be given to:

- Employment history.
- Gaps in employment.

- Frequent job changes.
- Inconsistencies within applications.
- Safeguarding-related information.
- Qualifications and experience.

Any anomalies or concerns will be explored during the recruitment process.

References

References form an important part of safer recruitment.

References will normally:

- Be obtained from professional referees.
- Be requested directly from the referee.
- Verify suitability to work with children.
- Confirm employment history where possible.

References will be scrutinised carefully and any concerns explored before appointment. Open testimonials or references supplied solely by the candidate will not be relied upon as the primary recruitment reference.

Interviews

Interviews are an opportunity to assess both competence and safeguarding suitability.

The interview process will normally explore:

- Professional experience.
- Values and behaviours.
- Safeguarding understanding.
- Professional boundaries.
- Attitudes towards children.
- Experience of working with vulnerable learners.
- Commitment to inclusive practice.

Candidates may be asked to explain how they would respond to safeguarding scenarios or professional dilemmas. The purpose is not simply to assess knowledge but to understand how individuals think, reflect and act in practice.

Pre-Employment Checks

No appointment will be confirmed until appropriate checks have been completed.

Checks may include:

Identity Verification

Verification of identity through approved documentation.

Right to Work

Verification of legal right to work within the United Kingdom.

Qualifications

Verification of relevant qualifications where required.

Employment History

Verification of previous employment and experience.

Enhanced DBS Check

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks where required.

Children's Barred List Check

Checks where regulated activity is involved.

Prohibition Checks

Checks where applicable under relevant education legislation.

Overseas Checks

Additional checks where individuals have lived or worked overseas.

Online Searches

Publicly available online information may be reviewed in accordance with current safeguarding guidance to identify issues relevant to suitability to work with children.

Single Central Record

The Starfish Hub will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with statutory requirements. The SCR will record relevant recruitment and vetting checks for individuals working within the provision.

The SCR will be monitored regularly to ensure compliance.

Volunteers

Volunteers contribute significantly to the life of The Starfish Hub and will be recruited safely.

Risk assessments will determine the level of checks required.

Volunteers will:

- Receive safeguarding information.
- Understand reporting procedures.
- Work within agreed boundaries.
- Be appropriately supervised.

Agency Staff, Contractors and Visitors

The Starfish Hub will seek assurance that agency staff, contractors and other adults working on site have undergone appropriate safeguarding checks.

The level of supervision provided will reflect:

- The nature of the work.
- Access to children.
- Safeguarding risks identified.

Visitors will be managed in accordance with site safeguarding procedures.

Induction and Probation

Safer recruitment does not end at appointment.

All new staff will receive an induction programme covering:

- Safeguarding and child protection.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Behaviour and relational practice.
- Whistleblowing.
- Low-Level Concerns.
- Health and safety.
- Online safety.
- The Starfish Way.

Where applicable, staff will complete a probationary period during which suitability, performance and professional conduct are reviewed.

Record Keeping and Data Protection

Recruitment records will be maintained securely and in accordance with:

- Data Protection Act 2018.
- UK GDPR.
- The Starfish Hub Data Protection & Information Governance Policy.

Access to recruitment records will be restricted to authorised individuals. Information will be retained and disposed of in accordance with organisational retention schedules.

Monitoring and Review

The Director and Head of Provision will monitor safer recruitment arrangements to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding expectations.

Monitoring may include:

- Recruitment processes.
- Recruitment records.
- Single Central Record audits.
- Staff induction arrangements.
- Safeguarding training compliance.
- Recruitment outcomes and learning.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance or organisational practice require amendment.