

Document Title:	Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure
Document Purpose:	The purpose of safer recruitment is to help deter, reject or identify potential staff or volunteers who might pose a risk to children or adults at risk, or who are otherwise unsuitable to work with them, by implementing rigorous policies and procedures which: • Assess candidates' attitude, values and behaviours to work with children and adults at risk. • Ensure new employees understand what is expected of them. • Ensure that employees are kept safe, as well as the children and adults with whom they are working. STRM is committed to safe recruitment as a vital part of its safeguarding policy and procedures. We are committed to creating settings in which everyone feels welcome and safe. Respect for equity, diversity, and inclusion is embedded in our organisation's culture, which is promoted and underpinned by our codes of conduct, policies, and procedures. Any discriminatory, offensive, or violent behaviour is unacceptable, and we will work together to ensure that any complaint or concern is acted upon. This is only possible when people are recruited as safely as possible.
Document Statement:	STRM is committed to: • Safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults at risk by implementing robust safer recruitment practices. • Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk. • Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process. • Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role. • Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes children's and adults' safeguarding. We expect our partner organisations to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of safer recruitment by having appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard

	children, young people, and adults at risk. Where partners do not have their own safer recruitment policy, STRM will require assurance that equivalent measures are followed.
Document Application:	Organisation wide
Responsible for Implementation:	Trustees and CEO
Author:	Maggie Cleary
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<u>Appendix: Legislative & Policy Framework</u> Internal STRM Policies and Documents • Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers • Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy • Whistleblowing Policy • Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy • Safeguarding Children Policy • Safeguarding Adults Policy • Safer Recruitment Policy (this document) • Staff and Volunteer Handbooks National Statutory Guidance • <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> (DfE, updated September 2024) • <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> (HM Government, updated December 2023) Relevant Legislation • Children Acts 1989 and 2004 • Education Act 2002 (Section 175 safeguarding duty) • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 • Equality Act 2010 and Statutory Guidance • Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 • Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty) • Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018 • Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) • Police Act 1997 and Police Act (Criminal Records) Regulations 2013 • Sexual Offences Act 2003 • Childcare Act 2006 • Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended, latest update 2023) • Human Rights Act 1998	

Approved by: STRM Board of Trustees
Date approved: 14-09-25
Review due: 14-09-28
Signed

Chair of Trustees *Robert Carr*

Date: 14-09-25

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1. What is Safer Recruitment?

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to make sure staff, volunteers, and trustees are suitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk. It helps create a safe environment and ensures safeguarding is considered throughout recruitment, selection, and induction.

2. Aims of this Policy

1. Protect children, young people and adults at risk by appointing only safe and suitable individuals.
2. Promote a culture of safeguarding from the outset of recruitment.
3. Ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in all recruitment decisions.
4. Meet legal and regulatory requirements including safeguarding law, equality law, data protection, and charity governance.
5. Support staff, volunteers, and trustees with induction, training and supervision.
6. Build trust with families, partners, and the wider community through transparent practice.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all STRM staff, including paid staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, secondees, freelance workers, and anyone working on behalf of STRM. It has been informed by NSPCC guidance and the Essex and Southend Safeguarding Partnerships.

4. Safer Recruitment Statement

STRM is committed to safe recruitment as a vital part of its safeguarding approach. We will:

1. Safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk by implementing robust safer recruitment practices.
2. Reject applicants unsuitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk.
3. Respond to concerns about suitability raised during or after recruitment.
4. Ensure all new staff and volunteers complete safeguarding induction.
5. Require partner organisations to demonstrate their commitment to safer recruitment.

5. Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Recruitment and Role Profile

Each role will have a profile describing duties, safeguarding responsibilities, and the level of DBS check required.

5.2 Job Advertisement

Adverts must:

- Outline STRM's safeguarding commitment.
- Include job title, location, duration, type of post, salary/benefits, and hours.
- Contain STRM's safeguarding statement:

"STRM is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to safer recruitment checks, including references and an enhanced DBS disclosure where applicable".

- Refer to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- State that only completed application forms will be accepted.

5.3 Application Pack

Each pack must include:

1. Job description with safeguarding responsibilities.
2. Person specification listing essential/desirable skills, experience, and safeguarding values.
3. Information on selection process.
4. Application form (instead of CVs) requiring two referees, a self-disclosure where applicable, and signed declaration of truth.

5.4 Shortlisting

- At least two panel members will review applications, scoring consistently against the person specification.
- Applications must be complete, consistent, and without unexplained gaps.
- Discrepancies will be clarified before shortlisting where possible, or noted for interview.
- Where appropriate, a service user or parent carer may join the panel.

5.5 Interviews

- All candidates will be assessed equally against the person specification.
- Candidates will be asked in advance if adjustments are needed.
- At least one panel member will hold Safer Recruitment training.
- Volunteers and freelance staff will be assessed with the same rigour as employees.
- Questions will include at least one on safeguarding and one on attitudes to working with children and adults at risk.

- Hypothetical questions will be avoided unless candidates lack direct experience.
- Follow-up questions will address gaps, discrepancies, or safeguarding concerns.
- Candidates will be told if a DBS check is required and invited to declare relevant information.

5.6 Causes for Concern

If an answer or reference raises concern, further clarification must be sought. Concerns must be escalated if serious doubts remain about suitability.

5.7 References and Vetting

- Two references are required, one from the most recent employer where possible.
- Family, partners, or close friends cannot act as referees.
- Referees must be told the role involves children and/or adults at risk.
- References must be checked for consistency with the application and any concerns followed up.
- Open or basic references will not be accepted.
- Significant safeguarding concerns must be escalated to the CEO or DSL.

However, when providing references for former staff, trustees, or volunteers, it is the policy of STRM Charity to provide only factual confirmation of:

- Dates of employment/engagement
- Position held (e.g. paid staff member, volunteer, trustee)
- STRM does not provide subjective assessments of conduct, performance, or suitability.
- Where applicable, STRM will confirm whether there were any substantiated safeguarding or disciplinary concerns during the period of employment.
- This approach ensures fairness, consistency, and compliance with safeguarding duties, while protecting both the organisation and the individual.

5.8 DBS Checks

- All roles involving regulated activity or regular access to children/adults at risk require the appropriate level of DBS check.
- The CEO, senior managers and DSL must hold an Enhanced DBS.
- Appointments will not be confirmed until the DBS check is received and reviewed.
- Overseas police checks will be obtained if candidates have lived abroad.

5.9 Pre-Appointment Checks

STRM will verify identity, date of birth, right to work (for paid roles), DBS outcome, overseas checks (where relevant), qualifications, and professional memberships/registrations.

5.10 Final Appointment

Appointments will only be confirmed once all required checks are complete and satisfactory.

5.11 Agency and Third-Party Recruitment

- Where STRM uses agencies or third parties to provide staff or volunteers, the same safer recruitment standards will apply.
- STRM will obtain written confirmation from the agency that all required checks have been carried out.
- STRM will verify the identity of the worker on their first day to confirm they are the person referred by the agency.
- Copies of agency confirmation and ID checks will be retained on file.

6. Keeping Records

Recruitment records will include: application forms, ID and right to work evidence, adverts and job descriptions, references, DBS disclosure details, qualifications, professional registrations, interview notes, and shortlisting records. Records will be stored securely, with restricted access, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Unsuccessful applicant data will be retained for 6 months, successful applicants for the period of involvement plus six years.

7. Induction and Training

7.1 Employees

- Receive a planned induction including safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Complete safeguarding training (introduction, annual refreshers, and online safety where relevant).
- Receive a safeguarding briefing from their supervisor or DSL.

7.2 Volunteers

- Receive role-specific induction including safeguarding responsibilities, code of conduct, and health & safety.
- Complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role before any unsupervised work.
- Supported by a named supervisor during a 3-month settling-in period.

7.3 Trustees

- Receive a governance induction covering safeguarding responsibilities.
- Provided with safeguarding policies and Trustee Code of Conduct.
- Complete safeguarding training at least every 2 years.
- Complete a fit and proper person declaration and confirm they are not disqualified from acting as trustees.

7.4 Contractors, Seconded and Freelancers

- Read STRM's safeguarding policies.
- Receive a safeguarding briefing from their supervisor or DSL.
- Undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

8. Probation, Settling-In and Review

8.1 Employees

- Normally serve a 3–6 month probationary period.
- Performance, conduct and safeguarding practice monitored by supervisor.
- Probation may be extended if needed.

8.2 Volunteers

- Complete a 3-month settling-in period with a named supervisor.
- Suitability reviewed jointly by volunteer and supervisor.
- STRM may end a placement if safeguarding or conduct concerns arise.

8.3 Trustees

- Serve a 6-month initial review period.
- Chair of Trustees provides support and oversight.
- Board decides at review whether to confirm, extend, or end the appointment.

9. Ongoing Review

STRM will review this policy annually, or sooner if law or guidance changes. Regular safeguarding training will be provided to all staff, volunteers and trustees, and feedback will be sought to improve recruitment practice.

Appendix A: Safer Recruitment Toolkit & Checklist

This appendix supports the STRM Safer Recruitment Policy. It provides step-by-step guidance for recruitment panels, managers, and trustees to follow in practice.

1. Before Advertising

1. Draft role description (include safeguarding responsibilities).
 2. Identify level of DBS check required.
 3. Draft advert with safeguarding statement and link to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
 4. State that only completed application forms will be accepted (no CVs).
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2. Application Pack

1. Include job description, person specification, application form, and information on recruitment process.
 2. Application form must request:
 - Two referees (not family/friends).
 - Full work/volunteering history with explanations for gaps.
 - Self-disclosure (if applicable).
 - Signed declaration of truth.
-

3. Shortlisting

1. Minimum of two panel members (one safer recruitment trained if possible).

2. Check applications are complete, consistent, and without unexplained gaps.
 3. Score applicants against the person specification using agreed criteria.
 4. Record reasons for decisions.
 5. Note discrepancies for interview follow-up.
 6. Where appropriate, involve a parent carer or service user.
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4. Interview Preparation

1. Agree panel roles (chair, note-taker, safeguarding lead).
 2. Draft questions including:
 - At least one safeguarding question.
 - At least one on attitudes to children/adults at risk.
 - Job-specific questions.
 3. Avoid hypotheticals unless candidate lacks direct experience.
 4. Ask candidates in advance if adjustments are needed.
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5. Interview

1. Welcome candidate and explain process.
 2. Ask agreed core questions to all; follow up on gaps or concerns.
 3. Explain DBS requirement and invite disclosure.
 4. Record answers and notes securely.
-

6. References

1. Use STRM Reference Request Form.
 2. Send referees the job description/person specification.
 3. Do not accept open/photocopied/self-supplied references.
 4. Check for consistency; follow up vague statements (record outcomes).
 5. Escalate safeguarding concerns to the CEO or DSL.
 6. Record if referee refuses and seek an alternative.
-

7. DBS and Pre-Appointment Checks

1. Ensure correct DBS level completed.
 2. CEO, senior managers and DSL must always hold Enhanced DBS.
 3. If lived abroad 3+ months in last 5 years → overseas police check.
 4. Request certified translation if not in English.
 5. Verify: ID, right to work, qualifications, professional memberships.
-

8. Agency and Third-Party Staff

1. Obtain written confirmation agency has completed checks.
 2. Retain confirmation on file.
 3. Verify worker identity on arrival.
-

9. Final Appointment

1. Make conditional offer subject to satisfactory checks.
 2. Confirm appointment only when all checks are complete and satisfactory.
 3. Record decision and retain documentation securely.
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10. Induction & Probation

1. Provide safeguarding induction (policies, DSL, reporting concerns).
 2. Assign named supervisor.
 3. Ensure safeguarding training completed before unsupervised work.
 4. Monitor during probation/settling-in period.
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11. Record Keeping

1. Retain: application form, ID, job description, references, DBS disclosure number/date, qualifications, shortlisting/interview notes.
 2. Retention: unsuccessful applicants for 6 months; successful applicants for duration of role + 6 years.
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Appendix B: Safer Recruitment Templates

These templates support safer recruitment and should be adapted for each role.

1. Job Advert Template

Job Title: [insert]

Location: [insert]

Hours: [insert]

Contract Type: [insert]

Salary: [insert]

About STRM:

[Short description of STRM, its mission, and who it supports.]

Safeguarding Statement:

STRM is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We expect all staff, trustees, and volunteers to share this commitment. Recruitment is carried out in line with safer recruitment practices, and all appointments are subject to relevant checks, including references and, where appropriate, an Enhanced DBS disclosure.

Equality Statement:

STRM values equity, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

How to Apply:

Please complete the STRM application form. CVs will not be accepted.

2. Reference Request Form

Subject: Reference Request for [Candidate Name] – STRM

Dear [Referee Name],

[Candidate Name] has applied for the role of [Role Title] with STRM and has given your details as a referee. As the role involves working with children, young people and/or adults at risk, it is important that we confirm their suitability.

Please answer the following:

1. In what capacity do you know the candidate?
2. How long have you known them?
3. What are their main strengths?
4. Are you aware of any concerns about their suitability to work with children, young people, or adults at risk?
5. Would you re-employ/recommend them for this role?

Signed: _____

Date: _____

3. Shortlisting Grid

Candidate | Essential Criteria | Desirable Criteria | Safeguarding Indicators |
Score | Notes

4. Interview Record Sheet

Candidate Name: _____

Role Applied For: _____

Date: _____

Panel Members: _____

Questions and Notes:

1. Safeguarding question: _____

Notes: _____

2. Attitude to children/adults at risk: _____

Notes: _____

3. Job-specific question: _____

Notes: _____

Follow-up on gaps/discrepancies: _____

Overall Assessment: _____

Decision: ☐ Suitable ☐ Unsuitable

Signed (Chair): _____ Date: _____

5. Conditional Offer Letter

Dear [Candidate Name],

We are pleased to make you a conditional offer of the role of [Role Title] with STRM, subject to the following checks being completed satisfactorily:

- Two satisfactory references.
- Enhanced DBS check (if applicable).
- Verification of ID and right to work in the UK.
- Verification of relevant qualifications and professional memberships (if required).

You must not commence unsupervised work until all checks are complete.

If you have any questions, please contact [Name/Role].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Role, STRM]