THE LINK TRAINING ACADEMY

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Version: SRV1 2026-2027
Approved By: Board of Directors
Policy Owner: Managing Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Effective Date: September 2026
Review Date: August 2027
Applies To: Employees, Directors, Contractors, Associates, Volunteers, Agency Workers, Visiting Speakers and Governance Representatives.
Related Legislation and Guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Version)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Care Act 2014
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Employment Rights Act 1996

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The Link Training Academy recognises that safer recruitment is not a single recruitment event but an ongoing safeguarding process that begins before appointment and continues throughout an individual's employment or engagement with the organisation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Link Training Academy Staff Handbook, Safeguarding Policies and associated organisational procedures.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out The Link Training Academy's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults through safer recruitment practices. It applies to all staff, governors, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, visiting speakers, and any individuals engaged to work with or on behalf of the institution.

The policy is designed to:

- Deter, reject, or identify people who may pose a risk to learners.
- Ensure recruitment processes are robust, transparent, and compliant with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and Ofsted requirements.
- Safeguard the reputation of the institution and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all learners.

1.1 Safer Recruitment Statement

The Link Training Academy recognises that safeguarding begins before employment commences.

Safer recruitment is a vital part of the organisation's safeguarding arrangements and contributes to creating a culture where:

- Learner welfare is paramount.
- Unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with learners.
- Staff understand professional responsibilities.
- Safeguarding concerns are identified and managed effectively.

Safer recruitment continues throughout employment and is not limited to pre-employment checks.

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2. Principles of Safer Recruitment

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners is central to all recruitment decisions.
- All appointments will be subject to safeguarding checks appropriate to the role.
- Recruitment processes will be fair, transparent, and free from unlawful discrimination.
- The institution will ensure equal opportunities and take steps to prevent bias in decision-making.

2.1 Adult Safeguarding

The Link Training Academy works with adults who may have care and support needs.

The organisation therefore applies safer recruitment principles to protect vulnerable adults from:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse

Recruitment and vetting arrangements will reflect the nature of the role and the level of contact with vulnerable adults.

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3. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

3.1 Advertising

- All job advertisements will make clear the organisation's safeguarding commitment and the requirement for enhanced vetting.
- Adverts and candidate information packs will reference the need for an **enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check** (including children's barred list check where appropriate).

3.2 Application and Shortlisting

- A standardised application form must be completed. CVs alone will not be accepted.
- Gaps in employment history must be explored and clarified during shortlisting and interview.
- Shortlisting panels will include at least one member trained in safer recruitment.
- Online Searches and Due Diligence

Before interview:

- Candidate shortlisted.
- Candidate receives interview invitation.
- Interview invitation states:

  "As part of our commitment to safer recruitment, The Link Training Academy may undertake online searches of shortlisted candidates. Information obtained will only be used for the purpose of assessing suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults."

Searches will be limited to publicly available information such as:

- Google search results
- Professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn)
- Professional websites
- Publicly accessible social media content

Searches should not involve:

- Accessing private accounts
- Sending friend requests
- Attempting to bypass privacy settings

The organisation will:

- Inform candidates within recruitment documentation that online searches may be carried out.
- Conduct searches fairly, consistently and proportionately.
- Only consider information that is publicly available.
- Ensure findings are reviewed objectively and in accordance with equality and data protection legislation.
- Discuss any relevant concerns identified during an online search with the candidate before a final recruitment decision is made.

Online searches will not replace other safer recruitment checks and will form only one part of the overall assessment process.

3.3 Interviews

- Interview panels will explore candidates' suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Specific safeguarding questions will be included, focusing on values, attitudes, and understanding of safeguarding responsibilities.
- Identity checks will be conducted at interview.

3.3a Assessing Professional Suitability

In addition to qualifications and experience, recruitment processes will assess:

- Professional conduct.
- Safeguarding attitudes.
- Values and behaviours.
- Professional boundaries.
- Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Understanding of learner welfare.
- Ability to maintain appropriate relationships.

Interview questions and selection activities will be designed to assess suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

3.4 Pre-Employment Checks

No appointment will be confirmed until all the following checks have been completed satisfactorily:

Regulated Activity

The Link Training Academy will determine whether a role constitutes regulated activity in accordance with current safeguarding legislation.

Where a role involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults, an enhanced DBS check and relevant barred list check will be completed before employment commences.

The organisation recognises that changes to regulated activity provisions have strengthened safeguarding requirements for volunteers and individuals undertaking teaching, training, instruction, supervision or learner support activities.

Checks will include;

- Enhanced DBS check with relevant barred list check.
- Verification of identity, right to work in the UK, and address.
- Verification of qualifications and professional status (where relevant).
- At least two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the most recent employer.
- Health declaration to confirm fitness to carry out the role.
- Overseas criminal record checks (where applicable).

3.5 Induction

All newly appointed staff will complete a structured induction programme.

Induction will include:

- Safeguarding.
- Prevent.
- Online Safety.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Staff Conduct.
- Professional Boundaries.
- Lone Working.
- Behaviour Management.
- Whistleblowing.
- Low-Level Concerns.
- Managing Allegations.

Staff must confirm they have read and understood all safeguarding-related policies.

3.6 Probation and Ongoing Suitability

Safer recruitment does not end once employment begins.

During probation and throughout employment the organisation will:

- Monitor conduct.
- Review safeguarding practice.
- Address concerns promptly.
- Assess ongoing suitability.
- Provide support and supervision.

Any concerns relating to safeguarding suitability will be managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

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4. Contractors, Agency Staff, and Visiting Speakers

All contractors, volunteers and agency staff working directly with learners must undergo the same safeguarding checks as employees, including an enhanced DBS check with barred list check if required.

References

At least two references will be obtained before appointment is confirmed.

References should:

- Be requested directly from the referee.
- Include the most recent employer.
- Confirm employment dates.
- Confirm suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults where appropriate.
- Identify any safeguarding concerns.
- Identify any disciplinary findings relevant to safeguarding.

Any discrepancies will be explored prior to appointment.

Volunteers

All volunteer roles will be subject to a safeguarding risk assessment.

Where volunteers undertake teaching, training, instruction, supervision, care or learner support activities that meet the threshold for regulated activity, the organisation will obtain:

- Enhanced DBS clearance.
- Children's barred list checks where required.
- Identity verification.

The Link Training Academy recognises that supervision alone does not remove safeguarding responsibilities and will ensure appropriate checks are completed in line with current legislation.

- The Link Training will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies that appropriate checks (including DBS and right-to-work, where appropriate) have been carried out, and records will be maintained on the Single Central Record (SCR).
- Contractors not engaging in regulated activity but present on site will be supervised at all times if they have not undergone full checks.
- Visiting speakers, including those engaging learners through enrichment or extra-curricular activities, must be approved in advance by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or senior leader.
- The organisation reserves the right to carry out checks on visiting speakers to ensure that the content of their contribution is appropriate, consistent with British values, and does not pose a safeguarding or Prevent risk.

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5. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- The institution actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records, and selects candidates based on skills, qualifications, and experience.
- Having a criminal record will not automatically bar an individual from working in Further Education. Decisions will be based on the nature of the role, the circumstances and relevance of the offence(s), and safeguarding considerations.
- All roles within the institution are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975, as amended). Therefore, candidates must disclose all cautions, reprimands, or convictions that are not “protected” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order.
- A positive disclosure will be discussed openly and confidentially with the candidate. Where necessary, a formal risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the individual poses a risk to learners.
- Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of an offer or dismissal.

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6. Safeguarding Culture and Ongoing Responsibilities

- All staff, contractors, and agency workers will receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role.
- All staff and associates are expected to uphold the institution’s safeguarding policies and report concerns without delay.
- Recruitment and personnel files will be subject to regular audit by the HR team and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

6.1 Ongoing Safeguarding Responsibilities

Following appointment, safeguarding responsibilities continue throughout employment.

The organisation will:

- Maintain an accurate Single Central Record.
- Monitor safeguarding compliance.
- Require annual safeguarding updates.
- Ensure staff understand and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Encourage staff to disclose any matter that may affect their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- Make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where legal thresholds are met

6.2 Staff Duty to Disclose

Employees, contractors, associates, volunteers and agency workers have an ongoing responsibility to disclose any matter that may affect their suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Individuals must inform the organisation immediately if:

- They are arrested, charged or convicted of a criminal offence.
- They receive a caution, reprimand or warning.
- They become subject to investigation by the police or another statutory agency.
- They become subject to safeguarding enquiries.
- They are barred or restricted from working with children or vulnerable adults.
- Circumstances arise which may affect their ability to undertake regulated activity safely.
- They become the subject of professional misconduct proceedings.

Failure to disclose relevant information may be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in further investigation.

The organisation will consider any disclosure fairly, proportionately and in accordance with safeguarding obligations, employment law and data protection requirements.

6.3 Low-Level Concerns

The organisation recognises the importance of identifying and addressing low-level concerns.

Low-level concerns may indicate behaviour inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct but which does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation.

All low-level concerns will:

- Be reported promptly.

- Be recorded appropriately.
- Be reviewed by safeguarding leaders.
- Be monitored for patterns of behaviour.

Information may be considered as part of suitability assessments.

6.4 Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation suggesting a staff member may have:

- Harmed a learner.
- Possibly harmed a learner.
- Committed a safeguarding-related offence.
- Behaved in a manner indicating unsuitability to work with learners.

will be managed in line with the organisation's Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure.

The organisation will make referrals to external agencies, including the DBS, where legal thresholds are met.

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7. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

The organisation will:

- Review the policy annually.
- Review the policy following changes in legislation or statutory guidance.
- Audit recruitment records periodically.
- Audit the Single Central Record.
- Monitor compliance with safer recruitment requirements.
- Monitor safeguarding training completion for recruiting managers.

Any weaknesses identified through quality assurance, audit activity or safeguarding reviews will be addressed promptly.

Policy Review and Distribution

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually.
- Reviewed following updates to legislation or statutory guidance.
- Reviewed following safeguarding incidents or audits.
- Communicated to all staff during induction.
- Available to all staff through organisational systems.
- Available on request to learners, employers, contractors and stakeholders.

Appendix E - Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Staff Conduct Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Learning, Training and Development Policy

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
SRV1 2025-2026	August 2025	Amanda Lodge-Stewart	Annual review
SRV1 2026-2027	August 2026	Amanda Lodge-Stewart	Full review and update to align with Staff Handbook, KCSIE, Ofsted expectations, adult safeguarding, professional boundaries, low-level concerns, managing allegations, ongoing suitability checks and safer working practice expectations.