ANL Policies & Procedures 

| Name | **ANL Safer Recruitment Policy** |
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| Version | 1 |
| Date approved by Directors | 02.06.25 |
| Date implemented |  |
| Date of next review |  |
| Author | Cheryl Cross and Pam Grimshaw |

| Target Audience | This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of ANL |
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| Summary |  |
| Changes since last version |  |

| **Name** | **Title** | **Signature** |
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| Cheryl Cross | Designated Safeguarding Lead |  |

**ANL Safer Recruitment Policy**

**Introduction**

When recruiting directors, staff and volunteers the following steps will be taken by Ascend Next Level to ensure only individuals suitable for working with children and vulnerable adults are appointed. In order to achieve this, Ascend Next Level follows ‘A Guide for Safer Recruitment in Derbyshire’ https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/social-health/children-and-families/child-protection/a-guide-to-safer-recruitment-in-derbyshire-leaflet.pdf

**Advertising**

When using any form of advertising to recruit directors, staff or volunteers, the following information will be included:

* Aims of the organisation and the relevant project.
* A detailed role description which highlights key responsibilities and clearly states the individual’s responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults.
* A person specification that includes the qualities, qualifications, skills, and experience required in the successful candidate, and details of the checking procedures to be carried out.
* A statement that the organisation is an equal opportunities employer, operating within safeguarding standards.

**Pre-Application Information**

Any pre-application information that is sent to interested or potential applicants will usually include:

* A job or role description, including roles and responsibilities
* A person specification which clearly states qualifications and experience required
* An application form
* A self-disclosure form

**Application Forms**

All applicants, whether interested in paid or voluntary, full time or part time positions, will be required to complete an application form. This will include providing details of relevant experience and work history. Where applications are incomplete, support may be offered in the application process if appropriate, eg if literary skills are insufficient.

**References**

Contact details of two referees who can provide a written reference are required, one of whom should be the applicant’s current or most recent employer or line manager. The second one should be a Church or community leader or GP or someone of good standing: none should be a work colleague or a close relative. If employment references are not possible, then two referees who are church or community leaders should be provided.

References will only be taken up when the position is offered to the applicant and will be requested via email to an organisation’s email address, not a personal one. Steps to verify the email address will be taken. Any queries / discrepancies will be followed up by phone and a summary kept on record. All non-written references will not be accepted, ie by telephone or face to face conversations..

References will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the applicant will never be accepted.

Referees will always be asked specific questions on the reference form about:

* The applicant’s suitability for working with children or vulnerable adults.
* Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
* The applicant’s suitability for the post.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references prior to the start date of employment.

**Disclosures**

All those with significant access to, or responsibility for, children or vulnerable adults, will be required to complete an enhanced level DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check prior to commencing employment. All advertised roles make clear that the candidate may be subject to a DBS check.

Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service will be renewed every three years for all staff, directors, and volunteers.

**Shortlisting**

Where shortlisting takes place, this will be against the person specification for the post and carried out by a minimum of two directors.

**Interview process**

The interview process for voluntary positions will normally be through informal discussion, though a record of the conversation will be kept.

Where formal interviews take place, they will be carried out by a minimum of two directors and usually be conducted face-to-face. There may be occasions where the interview needs to take place in a different format (e.g. observation of practice with children) due to the role, or via video due to location or accessibility.

Selection methods will be outlined before the interview and applicants will be asked if they need any special arrangements for these.

All applicants will be asked the same questions. Questions will relate to the person specification to explore experience and suitability for the role. The interview will be used to:

* Explore the applicant’s suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults and their ability to support Ascend Next Level’s agenda for safeguarding and promoting their welfare, regardless of whether there is a competitive process in place.
* Explore their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role.
* Explore any gaps in work history.
* Check the applicant’s identity (they will be required to bring along original documents that confirm their identity e.g. passport or driving licence).

**Appointment**

The successful applicant will be issued with a conditional offer letter, terms and conditions and all new starter paperwork. It will specify full details and requirements of the position and any probation period (if appropriate).

If the role is subject to a DBS check, the applicant will then be asked to complete the necessary form and provide the appropriate documentation. The applicant will be informed that the appointment is subject to a satisfactory DBS certificate and two references. They will also be assured that having a criminal record does not automatically prevent them from working with or for the organisation.

We will accept a current 3rd party enhanced DBS, dated within the previous 3 years, as passable as long as volunteers are in the process of having their DBS checked by ANL. The applicant’s DBS certificate number and date of birth are required for ANL to do a check on their DBS status.

All directors, staff and volunteers will undergo a formal induction in safeguarding.

## **Blemished DBS Checks**

a. The applicant will be asked to present the DBS certificate to the Lead Recruiter (the DSL).

b. The applicant may, if they wish to, withdraw their application.

c. If the application is withdrawn, consideration will be given to whether this required the triggering of the procedure for the “Recruitment of candidates with a criminal record.” (see below)

d. If the applicant self-declared the blemish and it has been discussed previously, the recruiter will check to ensure that the detail provided in the self-disclosure is consistent with the information on the DBS certificate.

e. If the applicant did not self-disclose, an open conversation about the circumstances of the blemish will be discussed with the applicant.

f. Whether the discussion arises from self-disclosure or examination of the certificate, a formal assessment will be conducted to ascertain the applicant’s suitability for the role by the DSL and / or the Safeguarding Director, and the outcome will be recorded in the personal file.

g. Advice can be sought from Christian Safeguarding Services if required.

h. The applicant will be given every opportunity to provide input to the assessment and the outcome will be explained to them.

i. A blemished DBS check does not necessarily prevent the individual from engaging in regulated activity. The risk assessment may conclude:

i. That the individual is unsuitable for the role.

ii. That further investigation is required.

iii. That the person is suitable for the role with restrictions.

iv. That the blemish does not indicate unsuitability.

j. If the risk assessment concludes that the individual is unsuitable for the role, consideration will be given to:

i. Whether there are other roles for which the individual would be suitable.

ii. Whether the “Recruitment of candidates with a criminal record” process needs to be triggered (see below).

k. Once the details of the certificate have been recorded in the Single Central Record, the certificate will be returned to the applicant and no copies will be retained.

**Probation period**

All new employees will be subject to a probation period proportionate to the role and communicated in the job description. The probation period is a trial period, to enable the assessment of an employee's suitability for the role for which they have been recruited.

**Recruitment of candidates with a criminal record**

Ascend Next Level is committed to a culture of inclusivity and equality whilst ensuring the safe provision of services to children and vulnerable adults. We recognise the contribution that all people can make as current or future directors, staff members and volunteers, and are committed to a fair recruitment process in which no one faces unfair discrimination due to a criminal record. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent someone from working with or for our organisation: however it is a criminal offence for anyone to apply for a role or work with a group from which they have been barred.

The application form for any role at Ascend Next Level will ask specific questions about criminal convictions and investigations relating to children and adults at risk of harm. Declaring information at this point will not necessarily disqualify someone from continuing the application process, and it will only be convictions and investigations relating to children and adults at risk of harm that will result in immediate discontinuation.

Any information provided to Ascend Next Level through a self-disclosure form will be kept confidential. Ascend Next Level staff will appropriately risk assess any disclosures an applicant has made on the form and ensure that we comply with our legal obligations in acting upon information received.

In order to make a fair, measured and comprehensive decision about any matters revealed by an applicant with a criminal record, a member of the Ascend Next Level Directors will have a conversation with the applicant and carry out a criminal record assessment.

Our criminal record assessment will consider:

* Whether a conviction is spent or unspent and the length of time since the offence(s) occurred.
* The nature and seriousness of any offence revealed.
* Whether the conviction is relevant to the position applied for.
* The age at the time of the offence(s) and any pattern of offending behaviour.
* The circumstances surrounding the offence(s), the explanation(s) provided and whether the applicant’s circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour.
* How the offence(s) impacts upon the applicant’s ability to carry out the role.

A historical criminal record that has no bearing on the role being applied for, and that would pose no risk to the applicant or the children and adults at risk of harm Ascend Next Level support, will not prevent the applicant from working or volunteering with our organisation.

Information shared with us will be requested, processed, and stored in line with the [Data Protection Act](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection) 2018. Any information about an applicant’s criminal record will only be shared as is absolutely necessary during the application and decision-making process.

Contacts

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Ascend Next Level Deputy Safeguarding Lead

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Any safeguarding matters can be reported to Derbyshire County Council 01629 533190 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9.30am and 4pm on Saturdays. (Out of hours number 01629 532600).

The Christian Safeguarding Services helpline number is 0116 218 44208am to 10pm (ANL holds gold membership of CSS)