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VERSION	REVIEWER/APPROVAL SIGNATURE	REVIEW NOTES
Version 1 – 17/2/2025	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team
Version 2 – 12/03/2025	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team
Version 3 – 01.06.2026	<i>Georgie Mann</i>	On behalf of the Senior Management Team

Safer Recruitment Policy

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1. Purpose and Scope

Heritage Skills Academy (HSA) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of apprentices during their time with our organisation.

This policy is underpinned by statutory safeguarding guidance including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)

HSA is committed to fair, safe and consistent recruitment practices which ensure only suitable individuals are appointed.

This policy applies to all recruitment activities including:

- Permanent staff
- Fixed-term staff
- Temporary staff
- Consultants
- Non-Executive Directors
- Agency staff and contractors
- Any individuals working with or having access to learners

2. Safeguarding Statement

Heritage Skills Academy prioritises safeguarding throughout our recruitment process. The following statement will be included in all vacancy advertisements:

HSA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners. Recruitment practices reflect this commitment.

Candidates should be aware that:

- Enhanced background checks will be undertaken where appropriate
- DBS barred list checks will be carried out where required by role eligibility
- Online searches may be conducted as part of due diligence (in a structured and documented manner)
- Safeguarding and Prevent training is mandatory for all staff
- Employment history gaps must be explained
- Qualifications and professional references will be verified
- Recruitment decisions are made fairly and consistently in line with equality legislation

3. Training Requirements

The General Manager will undertake safer recruitment training, refreshed every three years.

This training will cover:

- Right to work verification
- Identity and document verification
- Structured interviewing techniques
- Safeguarding risk identification
- Prevent awareness in recruitment contexts
- Recognising fraudulent documentation
- Reference validation and risk escalation

4. Recruitment and Selection Process

Pre-Interview

- All applicants must provide full employment history
- Gaps and inconsistencies must be explored

- Shortlisting must be carried out using objective criteria
- The General Manager will take part in all interviews

Interview Stage

Interviews will normally be face-to-face or via secure video platform.

- Candidates must:
- Explain employment gaps
- Provide reasons for leaving roles
- Demonstrate suitability to work with learners
- Provide original identification documents
- Provide evidence of qualifications where required
- Interviews will be structured and documented using consistent scoring criteria

5. Reference Requirements

Two professional references are required, including the most recent employer.

References must:

- Be obtained directly from the referee organisation
- Confirm employment dates and role
- Comment on performance and conduct
- Include safeguarding concerns (if applicable)
- Confirm reason for leaving
- Telephone verification may be undertaken where appropriate
- References must be received prior to appointment wherever possible

Character references will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by a safeguarding lead.

6. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checks

HSA will undertake DBS checks in line with eligibility requirements.

- Enhanced DBS checks will be carried out where roles involve regulated activity
- Where eligible, DBS checks will include barred list checks
- DBS checks will be renewed every three years
- The level of DBS check required will be determined by the safeguarding lead in line with role responsibilities
- Appointment will not proceed where an individual is barred from working with children or vulnerable groups

Where a DBS is pending, a documented risk assessment will be completed before any supervised or unsupervised activity is permitted.

7. Overseas Check

Where candidates have lived or worked outside the UK for more than three months in the last five years:

- Appropriate overseas police checks or certificates of good conduct will be obtained
- Additional identity verification will be completed where required

8. Handling Criminal Records

Self-Disclosure

All candidates must complete a self-disclosure form.

- Unspent convictions must be declared
- Where required, spent convictions must also be declared
- Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of offer

Risk Assessment

Disclosed convictions will be risk-assessed by a designated safeguarding representative.

Factors considered include:

- Nature and seriousness of the offence
- Time elapsed since the offence
- Relevance to role
- Pattern of behaviour
- Evidence of rehabilitation

All decisions will be documented and made fairly and consistently.

9. Records Keeping

All recruitment records will be retained securely in accordance with GDPR and safeguarding requirements, including:

- Interview notes
- Reference checks
- DBS certificates and status checks
- Risk assessments
- Identity verification
- Right to work documentation

HSA maintains a **Single Central Record (SCR)** of all recruitment and vetting checks, which is regularly reviewed and is available for inspection by regulators and auditors.

10. Recruitment Governance and Safeguarding Assurance

Final recruitment decisions will be made by authorised senior staff in accordance with organisational governance arrangements.

All recruitment decisions will ensure:

- Safeguarding is prioritised
- Equality and fairness are maintained
- Vetting requirements are fully met

11. Induction and Safeguarding Requirements

All new staff must complete:

- Safeguarding induction
- Prevent Duty training
- Health and safety induction
- Role-specific compliance training

Staff must not work unsupervised with learners until all mandatory checks and induction requirements are complete.

12. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by legislative or regulatory changes.