



Safer Recruitment Policy

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Title | Safer Recruitment Policy |
| Date of update | 01/09/2025 |
| Date of approval | 29/09/2025 |
| Approved by | innov8 Workshops CIO Trustees |
| Date of next review | August 2026 |

Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of this policy
3. Key aims and objectives of the recruitment process
4. Recruitment and selection procedures
5. Vetting, disclosure and barring checks
6. What to do if vetting checks raise concerns
7. Induction

Annex A – Example application form

Annex B – Example job description

1. Introduction

innov8 Workshops is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment.

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step towards protecting and supporting children and young people who attend innov8 Workshops.

We therefore seek to deter, identify and reject candidates who may cause harm to students within our workshops, or those who are otherwise unsuited to working in an environment with children and young people. To achieve this, we implement robust internal recruitment procedures, whilst also seeking to retain staff that are highly skilled and fulfilled in their roles.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who work or volunteer for Innov8 Workshops in a role that involves access to children and young people, including but not limited to:



- Permanent and temporary staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees and Board members
- Agency/supply staff
- Contractors and visitors engaged in regulated activity

3. Purpose of this policy

This policy lays out clear and robust procedures to ensure that we only recruit people who share our vision to make a valuable contribution to the lives of vulnerable children and young people. It should enable us to identify when potential candidates for roles do not align with our vision or may cause harm to our students, whether intentionally or otherwise. It also ensures that our employees continue to maintain a high level of safeguarding awareness and expertise.

This policy is underpinned by guidance set out in: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. The innov8 Workshops Safer recruitment process is reviewed by the board of Trustees annually and safer recruitment is an agenda item at all Trustee meetings.

The Provision Manager is responsible for overseeing all recruitment activities and ensuring full compliance with this policy. The Chair of Trustees has ultimate accountability for ensuring that safer recruitment practices are embedded across the organisation.

4. Key aims and objectives of the recruitment process

innov8 Workshops overall aim is to deter unsuitable applicants from applying for roles with vulnerable groups.

When undertaking recruitment, innov8 workshops will ensure that it will:

- Comply with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance, including statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) – updated annually, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS),
- Meet its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks,
- Recruit the most suitable candidate in accordance with the Equality Act (2010), regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, belief, religion, disability or any other protected characteristic,



- Promote equal and consistent treatment for all candidates.

In addition to the core points outlined above, innov8 Workshops also expects its employees to ensure that:

- Any staff involved in the recruitment process are familiar with and comply with the provisions of this policy;
- Recruitment and selection activities are undertaken in a professional, timely and responsive manner, in compliance with current employment legislation and the safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance outlined above;
- At least one member of the recruitment and selection decision-making panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training in the last five years;
- Due consideration is given to creating a diverse recruitment and selection decision-making panel wherever possible;
- Staff involved in the recruitment process declare any close personal relationship with a candidate as soon as they are aware of an application, thereby allowing the Provision Manager to undertake a risk assessment and agree whether they are authorised to continue with the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

5. Recruitment and selection procedures

innov8 Workshops has a clear and robust process for recruitment designed to ensure that we achieve our key aims of recruitment.

The process is made up of the following elements:

- Advertising
- Application forms
- Job descriptions
- Shortlisting
- Selection process including interviews
- Recruitment offers and rejections
- References

Advertising

innov8 Workshops should widely advertise all permanent vacancies, secondment opportunities and internships to ensure equality of opportunity and to encourage a diverse candidate pool. The

innov8 Workshops CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales. Registered Charity Number 1202112.
Registered office address: Integ House, Woodlands Business Park, Rougham, Bury St Edmunds, IP309ND.



Provision Manager should risk assess any request to directly appoint to a temporary opportunity or advertise on a restricted basis. The Provision Manager is responsible for agreeing a recruitment strategy with the line manager responsible for the vacant role, as it may be unnecessary to place an external advertisement if the internal candidate pool is likely to yield sufficiently qualified internal candidates. The Provision Manager will also be aware of the broader recruiting requirements across the whole organisation.

Any specific safeguarding responsibilities relevant to the respective post will be outlined within advertisements and the following statement will always be included: *“innov8 Workshops is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we undertake rigorous safer recruitment checks for all roles. Appointment will be subject to an enhanced DBS and barred list check”*.

Application forms

All candidates are required to complete the innov8 Workshops application form for roles. See Annex A for the application form. The form requests written information on full employment history, qualifications and general suitability for the respective post as outlined within the job description. Candidates are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in their employment history. The application forms alone will form the basis for short list selection. The application form requires a candidate declaration regarding convictions and working with children. That documentation confirms that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. It is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone that is barred from working with children and it is a criminal offence for any individual who is barred from working with children to apply for a position. Candidates are informed within the application process that providing false information is an offence and that this could result in the rejection of their application or summary dismissal if the candidate had already commenced employment. In these circumstances, it may also be appropriate to notify the DBS and the police. Candidates are required to sign a declaration on the application form confirming that the information they have provided is accurate and true.

innov8 Workshops takes the control and processing of employee data very seriously and is committed to acting in line with the General Data Protection Regulations when processing candidate and employee data. An applicant privacy notice accompanies the job application form to ensure that candidates understand how their data is processed.

Job descriptions

Job descriptions are a fundamental component of any recruitment process, and the Provision Manager will review it before making an advertisement live. It outlines the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the respective role and the skills, previous experience and behaviours required to deliver effective performance. All job descriptions should include a specific reference to safeguarding responsibilities. See Annex B for an example job description.



Shortlisting

The hiring manager will co-ordinate a selection panel of at least two individuals to shortlist candidate applications; for leadership roles, a Trustee will be included in the process. The panel will review all candidates against the skills and experience outlined within the person specification and will complete a shortlisting matrix to justify their decision-making and ensure consistent treatment of all candidates. Successful candidates should be notified as quickly as possible to ascertain their availability for interview. All other candidates should be notified in writing within five working days. In line with the KCSIE revisions in September 2021, only shortlisted candidates are required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. The short-listing process should also include an online candidate search as part of the due diligence process on potential successful candidates. This additional check intends to identify any incidents of concern that are publicly available online in relation to any candidate. Online checks that have taken place as part of the safer recruitment process for each recruitment campaign should be recorded as part of the job application record. In circumstances where an online search of a candidate name highlights information of concern, that the hiring manager would not already be aware of via the application form process, the hiring manager should discuss this with the Provision Manager and agree how to manage this within the selection process.

Selection process

The selection process will be dependent on the requirements and seniority of the respective role. It will ordinarily include a structured interview based on the requirements outlined in the job description and person specification, with a clear safeguarding section for all roles, regardless of whether the post will undertake regulated activity. innov8 Workshops values its approach and culture highly and so in most circumstances candidates should have several interviews with a broad cross section of employees involved. The selection process may include role specific exercises, including safeguarding scenarios as required. Candidates will receive specific information in writing before the selection event. Particularly for mentoring roles, a monitored mentoring session should be part of the selection process.

As already outlined, selection panels should include at least one safer recruitment trained individual and should include a diverse range of individuals wherever practicable. innov8 Workshops holds a record of staff that have attended safer recruitment training and the recruitment records for each search should highlight the lead individual on each panel. The hiring manager should aim to share the outcome of the selection process within two working days or advise candidates if there is going to be a further delay. Feedback will always be available to any candidate on request.



Employment offer

The offer of employment by the selection panel and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties, subject to the satisfactory pre-employment checks already outlined. The successful candidate will receive a verbal offer in the first instance and a formal offer letter will follow via email within two working days.

References

The hiring manager is responsible for collecting at least two references. These should include two employer referees (including their current or last employer). Referees should not be relatives, personal friends or colleagues, but should represent two different organisations and be in a position of management with the authority to write a reference on behalf of the organisation.

Referees should be asked about the candidate's:

- Suitability and ability to work with children and young people
- Knowledge and understanding of child protection and safeguarding

The hiring manager is responsible for checking whether the information provided in the reference is consistent with the information provided by the candidate in their application form and interview. Any discrepancies, concerns or vague statements should be followed up.

innov8 Workshops operates a policy of open references which means that the candidate may read the reference supplied upon request. All references should be recorded as part of the recruitment process.

6. Vetting, disclosure and barring checks

All employees will undergo Enhanced DBS checks.

The following checks will be carried out once an offer has been accepted:

- ID checks – including proof of residence and photographic identification
- Right to work in the UK
- Overseas checks
- Qualifications (where applicable)
- Enhanced DBS checks
- Barred list checks



Innov8 Workshops will re-check staff DBS certificates every three years, or sooner if concerns are raised. Staff are encouraged to register with the DBS Update Service to facilitate annual checks.

Birth certificates

It's best practice to check the successful candidate's birth certificate, to find out whether they have changed their name since birth. You should carry out vetting and barring checks for all names the person has used.

For transgender people who do not want to share gender and name information with us, innov8 Workshops can follow a special process to apply for a criminal records check. More information is available from each criminal records agency:

- [sensitive applications for transgender applicants in England and Wales](#)
- [information for transgender applicants in Northern Ireland](#)
- [information for transgender applicants in Scotland](#).

Right to work checks

Even if the role is not paid, a right to work check should be carried out. The Home Office has published [guidance on right to work checks](#) (Home Office, 2021a).

Overseas checks

If a candidate has been a resident overseas for three months or more over the past five years, you should check the candidate's criminal record in that country. The Home Office provides [guidance on applying for criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#) (Home Office, 2021b).

The [UK ENIC](#), the UK national agency for international qualifications and skills, can advise on how to check international qualifications and skills.

Any documents not in English should be accompanied by a certified translation.

If you are unable to obtain overseas checks for a candidate, you should carry out a risk assessment to help make an informed decision about how best to proceed.

Disqualification from working with children - innov8 Workshops is responsible for making sure the people it employs as staff and volunteers have not been disqualified from working with children.

The Department for Education (DfE) has published [statutory guidance to help organisations comply with their responsibilities](#) (DfE, 2018).

Checking temporary or agency staff and visitors - It's just as important that innov8 Workshops ensures it recruits temporary or agency staff who are suitable to work with children as it is with permanent staff.

If someone is visiting innov8 Workshop to run an activity with children, the necessary checks must have been completed prior to their arrival. We will only engage people to work with children if they come from an agency or organisation that has robust safer recruitment policies and procedures.



The agency must provide written confirmation that the relevant safer recruitment vetting checks have been made for each temporary staff member or visitor. When supply staff arrive on site their ID must be checked.

A **Single Central Record (SCR)** will be maintained in accordance with statutory guidance. This will include a record of all recruitment checks carried out for all staff and volunteers working at Innov8 Workshops, including references, right to work, DBS/barred list checks, and relevant qualifications. The SCR is overseen by the Head of Provision and audited regularly.

Volunteers

All volunteers who may work directly with children will undergo appropriate safer recruitment checks, which may include Enhanced DBS with barred list check depending on their role.

A **risk assessment** will be completed to determine whether the role is regulated activity. All volunteers will be supervised unless it is assessed that their role meets the criteria for unsupervised access. The Provision Manager must approve all volunteer arrangements.

7. What to do if vetting checks raise concerns

If references, vetting, disclosure and barring checks reveal concerns about a person's history, innov8 Workshops will need to assess whether they are suitable to work with children and young people. There are clear procedures in place for making these decisions. This may involve putting any formal offer of an appointment on hold to make sure we have the time to consider everything thoroughly. If necessary, we will pass on information to the relevant authorities, such as the criminal records agency, professional bodies or Police.

References should provide all the information we ask for and the responses should be clear and direct.

- If a reference indicates a concern and is incomplete or vague, contact the referee directly to address these issues. Keep a written record of any telephone conversations.
- If the issue is significant, ask the referee for further details in writing.
- innov8 Workshops should not consider information about unsubstantiated concerns or allegations that have been proven to be false when deciding whether to interview or employ a candidate.

Convictions

In the event that candidates disclose any convictions on the employment declaration form or any are returned on the DBS certificate, consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the following criteria:-

- Date of the offence;



- Details of the offence, seriousness and relevance;
- Isolated incident of history of offences;
- Change in circumstances;

A formal meeting will take place between the candidate and the Provision Manager to establish further facts, including any relevant mitigation, for discussion with the Chair of Trustees. After full consideration of all information and a risk assessment surrounding the role for which the candidate is applying, the Chair of Trustees will make their decision and document this on the candidate file. If a candidate wishes to dispute any information outlined in the disclosure certificate they must contact the DBS directly. If a candidate challenges a decision to withdraw an offer of employment a paper review will take place within three working days and the candidate will receive confirmation in writing. There will be no further right of appeal.

People on the barred list must not be given a role that requires them to work or volunteer with children or young people in regulated activity. It is illegal for an employer to knowingly employ somebody to carry out regulated activity whilst they are on the barred list. If you find that someone who has applied to work with children is barred, you should notify the Police. You cannot use 'spent' or 'protected' convictions as a reason not to employ somebody (unless the conviction makes them unsuitable to work with children).

If the applicant has not been barred from working with children but the checks have raised concerns (for example if they have a criminal record), you need to carry out a risk assessment to ascertain whether the applicant is suitable to work with children and young people.

Risk Assessment

Decisions about whether to employ someone whose vetting checks raised concerns should be made on a case-by-case basis. A risk assessment will help work out whether they are suitable to work with children and young people. You should only share information about an applicant's criminal record with those who need to know. The applicant should be told who in the organisation knows about his/her record.

The applicant will usually know about any information revealed during a vetting or barring check. You should discuss any concerns with them as part of the risk assessment process. Innov8 Workshops follows the below guidance to ensure the process is as straightforward as possible for both parties:

- Past convictions might be a great source of anxiety and embarrassment for the person concerned, so you need to act with sensitivity and empathy.
- Take all reasonable steps to gather as much relevant information as possible.
- Make sure a third party is present during the discussions. Ask a colleague who was involved in the recruitment process to support you and take notes.
- Carefully plan the questions you need to ask in advance and keep the discussion focused on the individual, their feelings and attitudes.



- It is not your responsibility to decide whether a legal decision was right or fair – you need to decide whether the applicant is suitable to work or volunteer with children and young people.

Making the decision

The reasons for any decision should be objective, rational and easy to understand. These should be recorded and retained along with the notes made during the investigations.

Things to consider include:

- the nature of the offence and its seriousness
- the relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children and their families
- the length of time since the offence took place
- the length of the sentence
- whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending
- the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- whether these circumstances have changed (if so, do these changes increase or reduce the likelihood of similar offences happening in future?)
- whether the individual has changed since the offence (if so, what has led to the change and does this reduce or increase the likelihood of them committing further offences?)
- the level of remorse expressed by the applicant and/or any efforts to change
- whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend
- any legal constraints relevant to the role, for example if the person has lost their driving licence and the role requires driving.

Confidential information

If the vetting and barring check includes additional information that is marked "in confidence", you should not discuss it with the applicant. This could compromise a criminal investigation or the safety of another person and may constitute a criminal offence under the [Police Act 1997](#).

If you decide not to appoint someone based on confidential information, you need to be careful when you inform them that the offer is withdrawn. It is sufficient to tell the applicant that, based on checks and references that have been made, you have had to withdraw the provisional job offer.

Storing disclosure and barring checks

You should not store copies of disclosure and barring check certificates unless there is a dispute about the results of the check. Instead, you should keep a confidential record of:

- the date the check was completed
- the level and type of check
- the reference number of the certificate



- the decision made about whether the person was employed (with reasons).

If there is a dispute about the results of a check, you may keep a copy of the certificate for no longer than six months.

8. Induction

innov8 Workshops has a consistent induction process to make sure everyone fully understands and knows how to follow our safeguarding policies and procedures.

All new staff and volunteers:

- have read and understand our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures
- know how to spot the signs that a child may be experiencing abuse
- know how to respond appropriately if a child makes a disclosure about abuse
- know what to do if they have concerns about a child's wellbeing.

All staff and volunteers must complete child protection training as part of their induction.

In addition, for their probationary period of three months new staff will have a mentor and be supervised for some of their initial sessions with children and young people. This will allow concerns on either side to be raised and responded to appropriately.

Ongoing supervision and training

Supervision and training should be regular and ongoing. This gives everyone a chance to reflect on and improve their child protection practice and keeps safeguarding at the front of their minds.

innov8 Workshops ensures everyone is kept up to date with any changes that are made to your safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

Staff at innov8 Workshops receive relevant and/or statutory training on an ongoing basis in relation to their role which includes but is not limited to:

- Safeguarding Young People
- Safeguarding Young People with SEND
- The Prevent Duty
- Equality & Diversity
- Cyber Security
- Data Protection
- First Aid Essentials
- Health & Safety in Education: Staff Awareness
- Autism Awareness
- ADHD Awareness

Annex A – Application Form



Link to Innov8 Workshops application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/npCXjyQbHC>

Annex B - Example job description

JOB TITLE: MENTOR – INNOV8 OUTREACH

REPORTING TO: OUTREACH LEAD

CONTRACT – Monday-Friday, 40 weeks per annum during term time

SALARY – starting at £21,000

HOURS – must be flexible between the hours 8:30-5:30 to accommodate travel and administration time.

SUMMARY OF ROLE

We are seeking a passionate and dedicated individual to join our team as an Outreach Mentor. Working 1-1 with students who have additional needs, including SEN, SEMH and EBSA, this role is critical in providing support and mentorship to young people facing challenges or barriers.

The role requires you to organise activities out in the community and at our Outreach Hub to engage students while providing relational mentoring. You will be required to use your own vehicle to transport students to and from the session. The sessions should be led by the student's interests as much as possible and allow for them to have new experiences. It is integral that sessions can be adapted to suit the changing needs of our young people. You will have the opportunity to identify new locations for Outreach sessions which will then be reviewed by our Outreach Lead.

As an Outreach Mentor, you will play a pivotal role in encouraging growth and development in our young people while building trusting and supportive relationships. You will serve as a role model and advocate for the wellbeing and success of the young people we work with.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Experience working with vulnerable young people
- Previous mentoring experience
- Experience of working with challenging behaviour
- Full UK driving license



- Computer literate – must be competent with Microsoft packages, including SharePoint and One Drive

Desirable

- Knowledge of the educational system
- Knowledge of SEN/SEMH

You will:

- Assist in developing personal and interpersonal skills, such as communication, problem solving and decision making.
- Collaborate with our young people to identify their strengths, interests and areas for growth.
- Encourage and support our young people in exploring educational, vocational and personal development opportunities.
- Ensure excellent safeguarding practice and actively promote the welfare of all students on innov8 Workshops education programmes.
- Contribute in a proactive manner to the delivery of an effective and efficient service in line with innov8 Workshops ethos and values.
- Be willing to undertake training relevant to the role.

GENERAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

- To be an ambassador for innov8 Workshops - pro-actively promoting our workshops' services and ethos and being a role model to students.
- To be flexible, and prepared to go the extra mile i.e., to take on other tasks and responsibilities beyond the remit of the job role to support our charity to grow.
- To contribute to the development of new initiatives, policies and ways of working.
- To be a team player and supportive colleague to the team.
- To promote best practice in mentoring, health and safety and safeguarding.
- To develop your mentoring skills in line with innov8 workshops training.

This job description is not necessarily exhaustive and may be subject to review by the Operations Director in conjunction with the post holder.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or safeguarding best practice require it. The review will be led by the Provision Manager and approved by the Board of Trustees.