

Recruitment, Fair and Safe Selection Policy

At PMA we recognise that our staff are our single most valuable resource. The recruitment of the right personnel for the needs of the organisation is therefore of paramount concern and should be achieved within a policy framework that recognises the importance of this area.

PMA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all employees to share this commitment. PMA also recognises its employees as being fundamental to its success. A strategic and professional approach to recruitment processes help enable the organisation to attract and appoint employees with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil its strategic aims values. As an organisation, PMA implores all staff to embrace and adhere to the vision and values as set out throughout the organisation – these vision and values are displayed on our website to all potential applicants and are embedded in to the interview questions.

PMA has an objective to help keep young people and vulnerable adults safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for young people and vulnerable adults to learn
- Identifying young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- Taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.
- Achieving this objective requires systems designed to:
 - Prevent unsuitable people working with young people and vulnerable adults
 - Promote safe practice and challenge poor or unsafe practice
 - Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a young person or vulnerable adults' welfare, and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe; and contribute to effective partnerships with agencies providing services for young people and vulnerable adults.

One of the main purposes of the policy is to ensure that all recruitment and employment decisions follow a standard process which is a fair, rigorous, consistent, transparent and a legitimate assessment of whether an individual should be prevented from working with children and young people/or vulnerable adults. It aims to ensure that people who work, apply to work and/or are associated with for PMA are not discriminated against.

*For the purpose of this policy, the term 'Associates' refers to all staff, freelancers, subcontractors and any other external stakeholders.

PMA is committed to the values and practises of safeguarding, including those associated with radicalisation and extremism.

The welfare and safety of all learners and staff is paramount. We expect all those involved with PMA to share this commitment.

The aims of this policy are:

- Promote a planned, objective approach to Associate recruitment that ensures consistency throughout
- To maximise the pool of suitable applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Ensuring the best possible candidate is appointed to every vacant post

- To ensure that all appointments are made in accordance with the Equality & Diversity policy, best practice and comply with all relevant legislation
- To demonstrate our commitment to safer recruitment and employment
- To comply with current legislation, statutory duties and codes of practice. Making clear standards to which the organisation is expected to work to
- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults within our organisation and those who are learners
- To give assurance that unsuitable people are prevented from working or with children, young people or vulnerable adults within the organisation
- To ensure that employees and prospective employees understand what information in relation to criminal offences they are obliged to disclose
- To ensure that pre-employment checks are satisfactorily completed prior to appointment
- To undertake DBS disclosure self-declarations on a regular basis
- To deal with positive DBS disclosures on a case by case basis in a fair and indiscriminate manner in line with the DBS policy
- To monitor procedures and to ensure that attention is given to recruitment and employment best practices
- To maximise promotional and developmental opportunities for existing Associates.
- As an organisation, PMA is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of Associates is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective, that equality of opportunity is promoted and safe recruitment practices adhered to.
- Recruitment should be treated as a key public relations exercise as the way it is managed affects the Company's image, and consequently its ability to attract and appoint high calibre people. It should also be treated as an essential process to thoroughly vet applicants who may work with vulnerable groups.
- This policy has been designed to provide a flexible framework which promotes a good and safe practice, adopts a proactive approach to equality and diversity issues and supports fully PMA's core business.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - Safeguarding policy
 - Prevent; Extremism and Radicalisation policy
 - Equality and Diversity policy
 - Health & Safety policy
 - DBS policy
 - Ex-Offenders policy
- Safer recruitment is designed to demonstrate our commitment to safe recruitment and employment. It is underpinned by a commitment to the following principles:
 - Safeguarding children and young people and the protection of vulnerable adults
 - A duty of care to our employees, prospective employees and learners
 - Adherence to a system of safeguarding that is proportionate, unbiased and effective
 - Maintaining confidentiality standards about individuals' DBS disclosure information
 - Any abuse of the procedures within this policy will be dealt with through disciplinary procedures.

Remit/responsibilities

This policy covers the appointment of Associates on all types of contract. All Associates engaged in the recruitment and selection process shall receive appropriate training to enable them to discharge their responsibilities fairly and consistently with particular reference to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

There will be continual monitoring to ensure that PMA practices and documentation reflect best employment practices. The Head of Education is responsible for ensuring that all company employment practices comply with relevant legislation.

The Head of Education is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of appropriate standards of recruitment and selection within PMA. Any changes in procedures and practices must be approved by them alone.

Specific responsibilities for managers, employees and the Recruitment team are detailed as follows:

Managers: Every manager has a responsibility to ensure that:

- All recruitment is to be fed through from the Head of Education to the Directors of PMA, along with the Head of Finance and Head of Business Operations
- Recruitment procedures are followed at all times for fairness and consistency
- They attend relevant training sessions on recruitment and fair/ safe selection
- Recruitment practices and protocols are adhered to, in accordance with and operated to the comprehensive Equality and Diversity policy
- Accurate records are kept throughout the recruitment and fair/ safe selection process. Any notes or records made to be securely retained and filed in the employee's personal file in HR
- Clear and honest feedback is given to unsuccessful candidates where requested
- Ensure safer recruitment process has been fully cleared by DSL before relevant Associate engages face-to-face with any stakeholder.
- Associates: It is the responsibility of every Associate to:
 - Ensure that, where they have involvement in the recruitment process, they are aware of and comply with the recruitment protocols
 - Follow the guidelines and ensure they adhere to the comprehensive Equality and Diversity policy
 - Act as an ambassador for the Company at all times especially when actively involved in the recruitment and fair/ safe selection process.
 - Internal applicants have a responsibility to inform their direct line manager when applying for another position within the organisation.
- *Recruitment team: It is the responsibility of the Recruitment team to:
 - Support line managers with any issues surrounding recruitment in terms of offering advice, training, guidance and practical support where required
 - Ensure that any notes or records made for unsuccessful candidates are retained securely for a period of four months in accordance with the GDPR and relevant Company data policies and procedures (for more information see Privacy Notice for Job Applicants)
 - Administer the recruitment process
 - Advise potential job applicants
 - Bring to the attention of senior managers any issues which may have implications for the whole of the organisation
 - Review and amend the policy as necessary.

*Recruitment team consists of those conducting the recruitment process on behalf of PMA.

Application of the policy

In order to ensure compliance with the policy the recruitment and selection procedure must be followed in every case. Guidance notes for those involved at each of the stages are provided by the Quality team and can also be found in PMA's secure shared drive.

Authority to Recruit

With the exception of senior post holders, the authorisation to recruit to a vacancy is given in accordance with the following:

Appointments up to 12 weeks

PMA recognises that there will be circumstances where there is a need to provide short term staffing cover for existing posts in unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. Examples of such circumstances include providing for short term sickness cover, providing cover during a recruitment campaign in response to an Associate leaving, or to ensure adequate workload resource during peak periods.

With the exception of new posts, the appropriate member of senior management may authorise temporary appointments of up to 12 weeks' subject to budget constraints. If the appointment is likely to extend over 12 weeks in duration, this can be extended but relevant members of the team must be made aware. All new posts must be authorised in accordance with the sections below.

New positions

To create a new post, the following steps must be taken:

1. The need for the new post must be identified by the line manager and supported by the Head of Finance and Directors of PMA
2. A job description (including person specification) must be prepared by the line manager prior to the post being advertised
3. The pay scale for the position and timeframe for vacancy must be identified by the line manager ahead of advertisement and signed off with the Head of Finance and Directors of PMA.

Vacant position

When an existing post becomes vacant the following steps must be taken:

1. The need for the continuation of the position must be determined by the line manager and agreed with the Directors of PMA
2. When an employee resigns, an exit interview must be held to ascertain the factors which influenced the decision, with a view to taking any necessary steps to prevent others leaving for the same reason – see Leaver process
3. If recruitment is difficult in certain jobs or skill sets, consideration may need to be given to re-design the job or to introduce more flexible working arrangements eg job sharing, part-time etc
4. If it is determined the post should continue, the decision to fill the vacancy should be supported by the Directors of PMA
5. The job description and person specification must be amended by the line manager
6. If significant changes are proposed, the position must be formally re-graded by the line manager.
7. If a vacancy is filled by an internal staff member, the notice period for the changeover in role will be four-six weeks.

Re-deployment

Prior to commencing of the recruitment procedure, consideration will be given to individuals identified for re-deployment in line with the Redundancy and Redeployment policy.

Advertising

To maximise internal promotion opportunities and to recognise the development and full potential of existing PMA employees and consideration should always be given to filling any vacancy internally before seeking external applicants.

All external adverts will carry a statement regarding PMA's commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Candidates will be advised in the advert of a requirement for a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).

When necessary, a job information pack should be sent to prospective applicants or applicants may apply with their CV and covering letter.

Any applications received will be held for a period of four months in case of any queries relating to shortlisting, or interviews. These will then be destroyed.

Candidates are asked to complete part 1 of the DBS process upon offer of employment.

Shortlisting

The shortlisting panel should be the interviewing manager, ideally the post holder's immediate supervisor and senior manager/s. Any internal applicants not shortlisted should be contacted and given verbal feedback by the shortlisting panel.

PMA has made a commitment under the 'Disability Confident' initiative that any disabled candidate who meets the essential criteria for a post, must be invited for the interview and specific adjustments during the selection process will be offered as appropriate.

Selection Methods

Interview

All shortlisted candidates will be required to go through a formal interview process. The purpose of the interview will be to make an assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post and also to work with, or in an environment with children and vulnerable adults.

The interview panel should consist of the line manager of the post. Additional representatives, for example, senior management or role/sector specific staff member, may also be present as deemed appropriate. Consideration should be given to the make-up of the panel in terms of diverse representation.

There should always be a minimum of 2 interviewers in attendance – this is for the purposes of recruitment standardisation and safeguarding.

Additional selection methods

In addition to a formal interview, consideration may be given to the use of a range of selection methods including presentations tasks, psychometric testing, group exercise, the involvement of students and/or an in-tray exercise. All vacancies for teaching and learning posts shall include a teaching task or quality assurance task.

When using psychometric testing, this must be approved by senior management and shall only be given and assessed by suitably qualified and accredited personnel and will usually be used only for senior posts.

References

Two references will be requested by the DSL and at least one of which should be a senior person at the applicant's current or most recent employer. This includes internal as well as external candidates. References will be requested using a standard pro-forma document, within 24 hours of the candidate being selected.



The document will ask questions regarding the candidate's suitability for the post and their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults. Information provided on a reference may be verified with the DSL.

Offers of appointment

All provisional offers of appointment to successful candidates will be subject to receipt of the following:

- Satisfactory references
- Satisfactory DBS check
- Evidence of identification and right to work in the UK
- Validation of qualification certificates
- Agreement to undertake any qualifications required.

All interviewed candidates will be offered feedback.

Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS)

All Associates who have contact with learners, access to the learner information or visit the sites of our employers as part of their job role will be required to submit a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).

In the case of a disclosure of a conviction, the hiring manager and DSL will decide about an applicant's suitability for a role. An individual's criminal background will be assessed against risk to learners and PMA in line with Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975. All decisions are documented and stored in line with GDPR provisions.

Safer environments

PMA endeavours to develop and maintain an environment that prevents the appointment or employment of unsuitable people and challenges inappropriate behaviour.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults is an essential part of creating 'safer' environments. In order to achieve this, we have vigorous recruitment and employment practices which comply with the following statutory duties:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Legislation
- Protection of Freedoms Act.

Salary

The salary offered to the individual will normally be at the lowest point of the appropriate incremental scale. Exceptionally, a higher salary on the scale may be offered to reflect the market rate or recruitment difficulties in attracting the most appropriate candidate.

Expenses

Reasonable out of pocket expenses based on standard-class public transport costs will be paid to external candidates who live outside of the Cheshire East area or who incur excessive expenses to attend an interview away from head office eg travel more than 3 hours from their base. The cost of such expenses will be reimbursed by arrangement with the Head of Finance upon production of receipts.

Use of agency staff

With the exception of flexible assessing staff, requests for agency staff must be approved by the Directors of PMA. In general, such staff should only be used on a short-term basis to cover temporary staffing needs



of no more than four weeks. The senior management team will consider if any staffing needs can be filled prior to engaging the services of any agency.

Occasionally, specific business needs require specialised staff that cannot be sourced through traditional routes. In such circumstances, all terms of business must be reviewed by the Directors of PMA prior to entering into any agreement. The authorisation to proceed must be obtained from the Directors of PMA and documentation signed and logged.

Prior to commencement, DBS checks must be undertaken for all agency staff that will have direct, unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. PMA engages the services of specific agencies for the provision of flexible assessing staff.

Documentation and retention

PMA will seek to ensure that any data collected as a result of recruitment and selection is essential and relevant to the process, is kept securely and destroyed when appropriate in line with the Data Protection Act and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).

PMA holds unsuccessful application data for a period of four months whilst successful candidates will have their data moved to secure HR files.

If an unsuccessful applicant feels unhappy with the outcome of a job application /interview they have a grace period of three months to raise a concern/ complaint with PMA – they can do this via the Concerns policy.

Awareness

All employees must be made aware of, and understand the need for, PMA’s policies which relate to the wellbeing and safety of children, young people, vulnerable adults, employees and prospective employees. PMA will send out a clear message about our commitment to safer recruitment and employment and ensure that there is an ongoing culture of vigilance within the organisation. Any concerns are forwarded to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be fully investigated. External agencies will be contacted where appropriate, for example, DBS, police etc.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every year and amended where appropriate, aligning itself with legislative changes.

Main Contacts:

Name	Job Title	Address	Mobile phone
Ian Jones	Operations Director	ian@practicemanagersuk.org	07880 788 985
Austin Ambrose	Client Services Director	austin@practicemanagersuk.org	07726 921 685
Lisa Lindgren	Head of Education	lisa@practicemanagersuk.org	07751 091 395

Should you have any concerns around Safeguarding please email:

PMA DSL, Lisa Lindgren at: safeguarding@practicemanagersuk.org

Please be assured your email will be treated in the strictest confidence and that you will receive a direct reply from Lisa within 24 hours.

Revisions control:

Date	Summary of changes made	Changes made by (Name)	Version No.
Sept 2020	Review and full replacement of policy	Lisa Lindgren	V3.0

Next Review Due: August 2021