

Escape Arts Recruitment & Selection Policy

1. Definitions

Recruitment is defined as the process of finding, screening and hiring new employees to fill a job vacancy at Escape Arts.

Once applications have been shortlisted, **selection** is defined as the process for choosing and selecting the best candidate for the job vacancy.

Beneficiaries refer to people who attend and engage with Escape Arts projects & services. Escape Arts works with a diverse range of beneficiaries of all ages and this term can refer to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The **Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)** is the process of checking to see whether a prospective employee has a criminal record. All prospective employees of Escape Arts must undertake an Enhanced DBS check as a condition of employment due to Escape Arts work with vulnerable adults and young people. An Enhanced DBS check can only be obtained by a registered employer and is typically carried out for prospective employees who will be working with children, young people & vulnerable adults.

Competency is defined as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently. Competency when relating to specific job roles can be found in every job description.

2. Statement of Policy

Escape Arts is committed to providing the best possible service to its participants and to safeguarding and promoting welfare of beneficiaries involved with our services. The Charity is also committed to providing a supportive working environment for all our members of staff. Escape Arts recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to retain, attract, and recruit staff who share this commitment.

The aim of the Charity's Recruitment Policy is to ensure:

- That the best possible staff team are recruited.
- That employees and volunteers working with beneficiaries are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role.
- That all job applicants are considered equitably and consistently.
- That no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or gender identity, marital status, disability and age. For more information, please see the *Escape Arts Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*.
- Effective systems are in place to substantiate the suitability of staff and other people coming into regular contact with beneficiaries including obtaining information about whether a person is disqualified.
- That the Charity meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of beneficiaries by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the following groups of people:

- Job applicants and potential applicants
- Employees, specifically employees who will be delivering interviews and supporting the recruitment process.
- Artists/Contract workers/Suppliers
- Trustees, specifically the HR Sub-Committee who can offer support on Recruitment & Selection where necessary.

Any staff members or trustees participating in recruitment panels must declare conflicts of interest in advance and will not take part in shortlisting or interviewing where a personal or professional relationship exists with an applicant.

Although they are referred to, volunteers are not included within the scope of this policy. For more information on volunteer recruitment, please see the *Escape Arts Volunteer Policy*.

The scope of this policy supports new employees of Escape Arts from application to issue of contract. Post-recruitment procedures such as the Induction, Appraisal Process & Disciplinary Procedures are supported by the *Escape Arts Staff Handbook*.

4. Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Stage 1 - Specifying the vacancy

- When someone leaves the team, it is a good opportunity to review everyone's responsibilities and decide whether we want to reorganise any of the jobs. It may be the right time to give someone additional responsibility or redistribute workloads.
- However, if we decide we do have a vacancy due to someone leaving, or a vacancy has arisen because of an increase or change in workload, we need to obtain written authorisation from the CEO to recruit.
- If there is an existing job description, then ensure it reflects the current vacancy. If we need to draw one up from scratch, then the sample framework can be used as a guide. It is important that the job description is accurate, as we will use it to establish the criteria against which our candidates will be measured against the job specification.
- Draw up a list of essential and desirable criteria for the vacancy.
- Decide the salary band for the vacancy.

Stage 2 – Advertising:

- Where new posts are created based on a funding application that funding body grant conditions, recruitment policies and procedures need to be applied.

- Posts wherever possible will be advertised in local newspapers and on websites. However, not all vacancies will be advertised externally.
- Artist recruitment – artist recruitment will depend on available timescales, project activities. Artistic input will be sourced relevant to each project.
- All job advertisements and appropriate marketing materials will be reviewed for accessibility by Escape Arts Sensational Advisory Steering Group.

Stage 3 – Applications:

- Any person enquiring about the vacancy will be supplied with a job application pack which as a minimum, will include:
 - Job description and person specification.
 - An application form/an outline of the selection process.
 - A copy of our Recruitment Policy.
- All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role.
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) will not be accepted in place of the completed application form. Any Candidate who submits a CV will be asked to complete an application form if the closing date has not passed.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments throughout the application and selection process to ensure that all candidates can participate fully and fairly.

Unsuccessful applications will be retained for no longer than three-months in line with Escape Arts' Data Retention Policy. *For more information, see Escape Arts Data Retention Policy.*

Stage 4 – Shortlisting:

There will be a minimum of two people on the recruiting panel. The same people on the interviewing panel will be involved in the shortlisting of applicants for interview.

- The shortlisters must agree the selection criteria and develop a scoring matrix to assess applications. This will be agreed before applications are reviewed.
- Once the closing date has been reached, compare each application with the selection criteria and score accordingly. Meet to agree and discuss candidates to shortlist for interview.
- Send a 'regret' letter to those candidates who do not meet the essential criteria.
- For those candidates you wish to interview, set up interview times.

Stage 5 – Interview:

Candidates will be offered the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments at the interview stage and throughout the recruitment process, in line with the Equality Act 2010

duty to make reasonable accommodations for applicants with health conditions or disabilities.

Prior to the interview, the interviewers must ensure that they:

- Plan the structure of the interview. The following is an effective guide:
 - Opening - giving information about the charity & information about the job
 - Your questions
 - Candidate questions
 - Closing – determine availability & let the candidate know when they are likely to hear the decision.
- Plan the questions we will use to ensure we get enough **evidence** of the competencies we are looking for.
- Agree the criteria and scoring matrix for interviews.

During the interview, the interviewers must:

- Keep to the plan and give every candidate an equal opportunity to demonstrate his or her competence.
- Use a mixture of open, probing and closed questions to ensure we get the information needed.
- Take notes as to extent the candidate meets the selection criteria either during the interview or immediately afterwards, we may choose to score answers to help us remember and give feedback. Inform the candidate at the start of the interview that the interviewers will be taking notes.

Candidates will always be required to:

- Explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment.
- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available.
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure.
- Demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of Escape Arts beneficiaries.

Following the interview, the panel will make a decision on the candidate they wish to hire based on the interview and scoring matrix. This decision will be communicated to the successful candidate. Candidates who were not offered the role must also be informed. Final decisions on recruitment can only be made in consultation with CEO and Deputy CEO.

Stage 6 - Offer of Employment:

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional to pre-employment checks and agreement of a mutually acceptable start date. If the position is accepted, Escape Arts will carry out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

Verification of Identity & Address

All successful applicants will be required to provide the following evidence of identity, address and qualifications.

- Current driving licence or passport or full birth certificate; and
- Two utility bills or statements (from different sources) showing their name and home address; and
- Documentation confirming their national insurance number (P45, P60 or national insurance card); and
- Documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form.
- Evidence of the Right to Work in the UK.

Right to Work checks will be conducted in line with UK Home Office guidance, applied consistently to all candidates. Escape Arts will not discriminate based on document type, nationality, or perceived immigration status. Digital Right to Work checks may be used where permitted. No assumptions will be made about a person's right to work based on accent, name, ethnicity or national origin.

Copies of the documents will be taken and kept on the staff's personnel file. For more information on data held in the staff personnel file and how this data is processed and stored securely, see the *Escape Arts Data Retention Policy & Escape Arts GDPR Policy*.

References

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two satisfactory references, one of which should be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, then the second referee should be from the employer for whom the applicant most recently worked with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Neither referee should be a relative. All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with the Charity's beneficiaries where appropriate.

If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- The applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance, sickness and disciplinary record.
- Whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relates to the safety and welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults or inappropriate behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults.

In the case of a newly qualified student, their tutor and a personal or professional reference will be required.

Escape Arts will compare all references with any information given on the application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the applicant before any appointment is confirmed.

All references will be taken up **BEFORE** employment commences.

DBS Clearance

As Escape Arts works with vulnerable adults and young people, the Charity applies for Enhanced DBS clearance in respect of all prospective staff members, artists, trustees and volunteers who will be working with the Charity's beneficiaries.

Where Escape Arts recruits temporary staff and uses staff from agencies then the Charity expects those agencies to have completed DBS checks with these staff prior to them being available for work. Proof of DBS clearance will be required before the Charity will commission services from any such organisation or self-employed employees.

New staff members and new volunteers will not under any circumstances have **unsupervised** access to any of Escape Arts' beneficiaries before the DBS check comes back and a decision is made about that person's suitability.

Once the DBS certificate has been received, the data is accessed only by trained staff involved in recruitment, stored securely, and retained only as long as legally permitted and operationally necessary. This data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR Act (2018) Article 10 for safeguarding and employment purposes. The lawful basis under Article 6 of the Act is legitimate interests or legal obligation, depending on the role.

Stage 7 - Issue of Contract and Probation Period:

If the condition in the section above are satisfied and the offer of employment is accepted, the contract of employment will be issued by Escape Arts.

All appointments are subject to a three-month probationary period during which the notice period to terminate the employment for whatever reason, by either the employee or the Charity is one week. For more information, see the *Escape Arts Staff Handbook*. Escape Arts also reserves the right to extend the probationary should this be deemed necessary.

After the issue of contract, the employee will then receive a formal induction, which includes information about the Charity's work, projects and staff team and overview training of all Escape Arts policies & procedures. The employee will also be given a copy of the *Escape Arts Staff Handbook*, which contains information on the staff policies and procedures such as the Charity's appraisal/review programme, sickness/absence/leave procedures and disciplinary procedures.

5. Complaints

Candidates who believe they have been treated unfairly or inconsistently may submit a recruitment complaint to the CEO, who will respond within 14 days. Where the complaint involves the CEO, it will be reviewed by the Chair of Trustees and HR Sub-Committee. *For more information, see Escape Arts Evaluation & Feedback Policy.*

6. Equal Opportunities

Escape Arts is an Equal Opportunities employer, and the Charity is committed to eliminating discrimination. Our aim is to ensure that every employee & prospective employee feels respected and is valued based on their skills, performance and commitment.

It is our policy that all employees, volunteers and beneficiaries will be treated fairly and with respect. This also applies to employment decisions, including those connected with:

- Recruitment, selection, promotion and advertisement of jobs
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Training, career development and progression
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Relationships between members of staff

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of the **"protected characteristics"** in the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Gender Identity*
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Age.

*Although discrimination because of gender identity is not covered by the Equality Act 2010, Escape Arts has shown to include gender identity as a matter of good practice and inclusion.

Escape Arts is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees, volunteers and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

The Charity recognises that the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for people within the scope of this policy to discriminate or harass people in the following ways:

- Directly or indirectly, or harass
- By association
- By Perceptive

Third-party harassment is also covered by the Equality Act, which occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (although this does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by third parties such as participant or a supplier. Escape Arts is committed to taking preventative steps to ensuring that third-party harassment does not occur through the *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*, which all new staff and volunteers must be trained on prior to working with community groups and all beneficiaries must have knowledge of through a signed Code of Conduct agreement. *For more information, see Escape Arts Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.*

If **victimisation** occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so, or being about to do so, this will not be tolerated.

Positive Action is an action an employer takes to achieve greater equality in its workforce. Under the Equality Act (2010), it is permitted in certain circumstances to allow an employer to recruit/promote appropriately qualified people and to cater for the needs of particular groups. Escape Arts does not have a policy of treating those with a particular protected characteristic more favourably than those without it and each case will be considered on its own facts. For implementation of this, see the *Escape Arts Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*.

Escape Arts is an Equal Opportunities employer and will not ask about the health of an applicant prior to an offer of work. The only circumstances in which Escape Arts will ask for any information regarding the health of an applicant are:

- Identify and put in place reasonable adjustments for the recruitment process, including interviews and assessments
- Establish whether an applicant is able to carry out an intrinsic function of the role, with reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- Collect anonymised equality monitoring information for the purposes of monitoring diversity and improving equality of opportunity

Escape Arts will not tolerate discriminatory practices and will work efficiently and effectively to ensure people within the scope of this policy can work for or participate in activities delivered by the Charity without discrimination or harassment; this is good management practice, it also empowers the Charities vision statement helping all

involved with Escape Arts develop to their full potential and therefore making sound business sense.

7. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Escape Arts Board of Trustees. Recruitment and Selection is a standing agenda item at the HR Sub-Committee Meetings and the CEO/Deputy CEO review all documents relating to Recruitment and Selection when an employee leaves and this policy is activated. This ensures that documents such as interview templates continue to be fit for purpose. The Deputy CEO is responsible for updating the induction pack for all new staff, which is updated quarterly to reflect new training needs and changes to policies and procedures.

This policy and procedure was adopted: January 2026

To be reviewed every three years.

Date for review: January 2029