

Policy on Safeguarding Checks and the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

Background

Family for Every Child is committed to safeguarding all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, from the risk of harm, abuse, exploitation and harassment that may be caused to them through any activities undertaken by Family for Every Child, both directly and indirectly. As an organisation using [safeguarding self-declarations](#) and criminal background checks to assess suitability for positions of trust, Family for Every Child undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. Whilst Family for Every Child welcomes applicants with convictions or otherwise, depending on the nature of the role that the individual is to undertake it may be that further consideration needs to be given to how the role may work, taking the specific nature of any conviction into account.

In line with our [Equal Opportunities Policy](#), Family for Every Child is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, volunteers, trustees and other representatives of the organisation such as consultants, as well as users of its services, regardless of age, race, colour, nationality or ethnicity, caste, physical appearance, gender, gender identity, faith or religious belief, political opinions, background, sexual orientation, relationship or marital status, pregnancy or maternity situation, HIV status, neurodiversity, disability or offending background. Family for Every Child actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for an interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience in relation to the requirements of the role description.

Safeguarding Checks Process

As part of the recruitment and onboarding process for all roles (staff, trustees, consultants), Family for Every Child will carry out appropriate verification checks (e.g. employment history, education history and professional references).

When applying for a staff role, individuals will be asked to complete an application form which includes a request to declare any unspent¹ criminal convictions. If an applicant with an unspent criminal conviction is subsequently invited to interview, they will be asked to share more information about the criminal conviction during the interview. The information shared will be assessed as per the process outlined below.

¹ An unspent conviction is a term used to describe any criminal conviction that you're still in the rehabilitation process for (which is predetermined according to the nature of the crime), or that will stay on your criminal record. An example of this is any conviction that results in a prison sentence of more than two and a half years or involves a violent or sexual crime.

In addition, as part of the recruitment and role description review process for all roles (staff, trustees, consultants), the HR team and relevant manager complete a [safeguarding role risk assessment](#). If the risk assessment results in the role being considered as medium or high risk, then individuals will be required to complete a safeguarding self-declaration form and Family for Every Child will request a criminal background check for the current country of residence, as well as a criminal background check for each country resided in within the preceding five years.

There is generally no period of validity for a criminal background check, and as such Family for Every Child will renew the checks for post holders every three years. Family may directly administer the process for some criminal background checks, but more commonly Family will use the services of a third party organisation to administer the checks on their behalf. Family for Every Child is committed to obtaining criminal records checks in compliance with relevant laws and to using such checks for necessary and appropriate purposes in a fair way.

All role descriptions with a medium or high safeguarding risk will contain a statement that a safeguarding self-declaration and a criminal background check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position. Family for Every Child will only ask for information about offences that we are entitled to know about (i.e. those that are not 'protected'²). Any information declared or disclosed will be treated in compliance with data protection regulations, and will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment, onboarding and employment process.

The existence of a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an individual from engagement with Family for Every Child. We encourage all candidates who have been invited to interview and who have criminal records to provide details (except for 'protected' convictions) at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, addressed to HR@Familyforeverychild.org. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment (for staff) or withdrawal of an offer of engagement (for trustees and consultants). We guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it.

Likewise, all staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and other representatives must inform Family for Every Child immediately of any summons, caution or convicted criminal offence received after their start date. We request that this information is sent under confidential cover to HR@Familyforeverychild.org. Failure to disclose such information may lead to disciplinary action / dismissal / termination. We guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it.

Assessment

² Certain old or minor offences such as warnings, reprimands and youth cautions may not be disclosed on DBS certificates in the UK. These are known as 'protected' offences and even if not protected in your country, Family will not expect you to disclose them.

Whenever the need arises, we will ensure that those in Family for Every Child who are involved in the recruitment, employment and engagement processes receive appropriate legal advice and guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment or engagement of ex-offenders. Any decision regarding the appointment, or continued engagement or employment, of any individual who declares an offence (via a safeguarding self-declaration form and / or via a criminal background check) will be undertaken via an assessment to ensure proportionality and objectivity. The assessment will follow relevant legal advice and will be undertaken by HR in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Safeguarding Officer.

The assessment will consider several factors, including but not limited to: the nature and seriousness of the offence, the age of the individual at the time, the time elapsed since the offence, any explanation the individual has for the offence, any evidence of rehabilitation, the responsibilities of the role within Family for Every Child, the level of safeguarding risk as outlined in the safeguarding role risk assessment, if the role could put the individual at risk of re-offending, if there could be a potential risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults engaged through Family, and any potential impact on the reputation of Family for Every Child. The outcome of this assessment (appointment, offer withdrawal, continuation in employment, continuation in employment with conditions, dismissal) will be discussed with the individual.

Approval, Adoption and Updates

The Leadership Team is responsible for approving, adopting and updating this policy.

Document history

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated where applicable.

Date	Document history
July 2024	Policy drafted
September 2024	Policy approved by Leadership Team

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