

**Safer Recruitment Policy**

**Professional Staff**

**September 2023**

Date Issued	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Next Review (3-Yearly)	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2026
Policy Owner	HR/Hon Sec

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## Our Safeguarding Commitment

1. We recognise that everyone should be protected from bullying and harassment and we promote a culture of inclusion and train our staff and volunteers to actively ensure this.
2. We recognise that the children, young people and adults that we work with may be vulnerable and that we have a responsibility to ensure that they can access the best opportunities to grow, live and learn safe from harm.
3. There is a commitment throughout our organisation to keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe, and everybody recognises the role that they have to play in achieving this.
4. We have clear expectations of those that work with us and we make this known throughout our safer recruitment process. We ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults have the right training to be able to recognise abuse and safeguard to a high standard.
5. We ensure that everyone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are supported to safeguard effectively with policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and updated.
6. We robustly and proactively assess our activities to make sure that they are safe and suitable for the health and security of all those that participate in them.
7. We ensure that when working with children, there is always an adult around that is ready and able to listen and respond to any concerns or disclosures.
8. We ensure that all personal information is kept securely and confidentially, but available to those that need it to be able to protect them and keep them safe. (See staff privacy policy)
9. We ensure that all of our staff and volunteers remain vigilant and are supported to raise concerns, or 'whistle blow' about anything that may not reflect this commitment.

## Aims

The aims of this Safer Recruitment policy are:

- To protect, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all those connected with our organisation with a specific focus on children, young people and vulnerable adults involved with our organisation's activities;
- To ensure that the best individuals are recruited based on their merits, experience and suitability for the position and organisation;
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance and procedure on safe recruitment practices;
- To ensure that all prospective staff and volunteers (i.e Board Members, Youth Leaders) are treated fairly.

## Scope and Publication

This policy applies to all staff directly employed by the Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ) and to all personnel working in paid positions on any MRJ or RSY-Netzer activities, events and programmes involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is noted that not all job

roles at MRJ involve working directly with children, young adults or vulnerable adults however, every best effort will be made to ensure that we follow a fair, transparent and consistent process appropriate to the job role.

This policy applies in all contexts and locations of MRJ's work, for example, our work in communities, residential camps, tours and conferences.

This policy is made available to all staff and prospective staff via our website. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the MRJ and RSY-Netzer's Codes of Conduct (which can be found in the staff handbook issued upon commencement).

## Responsibilities

### **Prospective staff are responsible for:**

- Providing all information requested as part of this policy and the recruitment process, accurately and truthfully (to the best of their knowledge);
- Supporting a timely recruitment process by providing information promptly when requested;
- Declaring any reasons that may impact on their suitability to fulfil the role advertised at the start of the process.

### **All recruiting staff are responsible for:**

- Recruiting in line with this policy
- Referring to HR prior to advertising
- Providing HR with all details of prospective employees (including referees)

### **Human Resources are responsible for:**

- Having a full understanding of this policy and procedure and being a source of advice and guidance;
- Processing applications, necessary documents and keeping accurate records of recruitment;
- Making formal offers;
- Maintaining staff files with all recruitment documentation included and any subsequent information relevant to the individual's employment or work.
- Support the line manager or Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing in conducting risk assessment for any prospective employee for whom there are disclosed or discovered concerns about cautions or convictions.

## Advertisement and Application

### Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity and access, all positions will be advertised to encourage as wide a field of prospective applicants as possible. This will usually involve a process of external advertisement.

All advertisements will be placed on our website and links to these adverts may be referenced to in any social media or newsletters or other suitable recruitment outlet.

In advertisements where the position involves working with children/vulnerable adults, the following statement, that clearly establishes MRJ's commitment to safeguarding, will be included:

*MRJ is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. Background checks and an enhanced DBS (or equivalent overseas check) will be required."*

### Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A clear job description, which outlines the responsibilities of the role being advertised, and a person specification is important in providing clarity to prospective applicants and for use in the selection process to ensure equitability and suitability for the position.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be written with support of Human Resources and agreed prior to advertisement. Advertisements will have a link to the MRJ website, where the job description, person specifications, terms and conditions and application form may be downloaded.

The job description will make clear that, where the position involves regulated activity with children, the position is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and that any prior cautions or convictions that would normally be considered 'spent' must be declared in accordance with this.

It is unlawful to employ any person into such posts that are barred from working with children and an offence to apply for such positions.

It should be noted on all job descriptions that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that our culture of safeguarding is upheld throughout the organisation.

Human Resources hold templates for the job description and person specification.

## **Applications**

The advertisement for positions within MRJ and RSY-Netzer will make clear that applications will only be accepted on the prescribed application form. This contains questions on an individual's academic and employment history and suitability for the role. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

There are different application forms for position which are working with children or young people. For these positions, the application form contains a declaration, as detailed above, for the disclosure of past convictions, cautions or restrictions of working with children.

## **Shortlisting and Interview**

Applications for the position will be shortlisted using the criteria outlined in the person specification. This process will be completed by a minimum of two members of staff. When recruiting for positions working with children/vulnerable adults, at least one member of the panel should have received appropriate safeguarding training.

A face-to-face interview will be conducted with the applicant either in-person or via video link. Wherever possible, a face-to-face interview should be held before making an offer of employment.

The interview process will seek to establish and verify the applicant's suitability for the position. It will also provide the opportunity to verify any gaps in employment or anomalies in order to reassure the panel that the applicant is able to meet the safeguarding requirements. Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations will also be explored further at this point, where disclosed through the application process.

At the point of interview (at the time where in-person, or immediately following where via video-link or other method), the applicant will be asked to provide original documentation that verifies identity, address and qualifications. Copies will be taken of this documentation and destroyed after 6 months if the applicant is not successful in recruitment.

## **Pre-employment Checks**

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two satisfactory references, with one from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the most recent employment does not involve work with children or young people, and where the applicant has previously worked with children, the second reference should be from the employer with which the applicant did work with children. If the applicant has not worked with children previously, then a reference will be sought from an educational establishment or other trustworthy source.

References will always be sought directly from the employer. References provided to MRJ via the applicant will not be accepted. Referees that are relatives of the applicant will also be

refused. Where there are anomalies or discrepancies with the reference and information from the applicant, this will be followed-up. All references will be confirmed with the source directly to ensure their validity.

In order to check the suitability of an individual for a role, a check of criminal convictions or cautions will be undertaken. This check will always be obtained prior to any applicant beginning employment. Where the position relates to regulated activity, there are several possible routes for this to take place, depending on the context of the applicant:

- For applicants living within England or Wales, an application will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to obtain an enhanced check on the individual. This will include verification that an individual is not on the Children's Barred List.
- For applicants that are from Scotland or Northern Ireland, an application for an enhanced check will be made to either Disclosure Scotland or AccessNI, respectively. This will include verification that an individual is not on the Children's Barred List.
- For applicants that are UK nationals that have spent time working or living overseas, a check will be required from the country that the individual was resident in in addition to a DBS and check of the Children's Barred List. These procedures vary depending on locality and guidance from the Home Office<sup>1</sup> will be used on how to conduct these.
- For applicants that are foreign nationals, a check will be required from the country that the individual is resident in. These procedures vary depending on locality and guidance from the Home Office will be used on how to conduct these.
- Where an applicant has had a previous DBS check conducted and has an active subscription to the DBS Update Service, the original DBS check certificate and a check on any new information available through this service will be undertaken.

**Please note:** MRJ will not check the Children's Barred List unless the position being applied for amounts to regulated activity. However, MRJ do have the right to carry out an enhanced DBS/criminal record check where an applicant would be completing regulated activity, but for the fact that the activity is not carried out frequently enough.

### **Dealing with Convictions**

For any individual that declares criminal convictions, or where this becomes evident through the criminal records check, formal consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and:

- The nature and seriousness of the offence and how long ago it occurred;
- Whether a one-off or a history of offences;
- Changes in circumstance;

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<sup>1</sup> Criminal Records Checks for Overseas Applicants – Home Office:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

- Decriminalisation and remorse.

This process will involve a face-to-face discussion with the applicant to establish and evaluate any risk factors that remain with regard to the individual being successfully appointed into the position. A risk assessment may be put in place to detail any steps to be taken by MRJ in light of information disclosed or discovered.

## Offers of Employment and Induction

Successful recruitment to the position will be contingent on the applicant meeting the following:

- Acceptance of a mutually agreeable start date and signing of the Statement of Particulars;
- Verification of identity (where this has not already been completed);
- Receipt of two satisfactory references (as detailed above);
- Completion of criminal records check (and Children's Barred List, where applicable);
- Verification of qualifications required for the position.

Upon successful recruitment, the new employee will receive an induction programme which identifies all policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct and safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## Staff Files and Records

All records of the employment process and checks will be retained by MRJ on an individual's personnel file (via BreatheHR). These records will be kept for the duration of the employment and for a period of 6 years after the end of employment and held securely.

Records on unsuccessful applicants may be retained for 6 months by MRJ, before being confidentially destroyed.