



Policy Number	Review Date	Next Review Date
43	March 2026	March 2027

Little Village Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Statement of intent

Little Village is committed to safer recruitment practices that help protect the children, families and adults we come into contact with, as well as the volunteers and staff who work with us. We recognise that safer recruitment is a key part of safeguarding and forms part of our wider duty of care.

We aim to recruit employees and volunteers who share our values and who are suitable, safe and appropriate for their roles. Our recruitment processes are designed to be fair, proportionate and inclusive while ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place.

We are committed to meeting our safeguarding responsibilities and complying with relevant statutory requirements and recognised guidance, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements and Codes of Practice. We carry out appropriate pre-appointment checks where required and apply a role-based, proportionate approach linked to responsibilities and level of contact. These principles apply across both employed and volunteer roles, with specific recruitment and checking steps tailored proportionately to each role. Little Village applies a Basic DBS check to all staff and some volunteers as a baseline safer recruitment measure. Where a role is assessed as eligible for a Standard or Enhanced DBS check, the appropriate higher level will be used instead.

Safer recruitment is everyone's responsibility. All managers and staff involved in recruitment and selection are expected to follow this policy and associated standard operating procedures.

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors and agency staff engaged by Little Village.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Little Village's safer recruitment approach and minimum standards when recruiting employees, volunteers, trustees and others acting on behalf of the organisation.

This policy aims to ensure that recruitment is carried out safely, fairly and consistently, with appropriate safeguards in place. It supports our commitment to safeguarding children, families and adults at risk by helping to deter, identify and appropriately manage the risk of unsuitable appointments.

It also aims to ensure that:

- safer recruitment responsibilities are clear

- recruitment decisions are based on suitability, merit and values
- appropriate checks are completed where required
- proportionate processes apply to both staff and volunteers
- recruitment practice aligns with relevant safeguarding, equality, DBS and data protection requirements

All staff involved in recruitment are expected to follow this policy and declare any conflicts of interest or close personal relationships with applicants.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors and agency staff engaged by Little Village. It covers both family-facing and non-family-facing roles, with checks applied on a proportionate, role-based basis.

This policy should be read alongside our Adult Safeguarding Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, Recruitment of Employees and Volunteers with a Criminal Record Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Data Protection and Retention Policy, and related standard operating procedures and safer recruitment annex tools.

4. Key principles

Little Village applies safer recruitment practices to reduce risk and support good safeguarding outcomes. Our approach is proportionate, values-led and evidence-based.

We will:

- embed safeguarding throughout recruitment and onboarding
- safeguarding expectations are clearly communicated to candidates throughout the recruitment process
- apply checks based on role risk and level of contact and keep a record
- ensure no one's works unsupervised with families where required checks are outstanding
- use structured and consistent selection processes
- obtain and review appropriate references
- verify identity and right to work where required
- treat applicants fairly and without discrimination
- record and justify recruitment decisions
- risk assess information of concern rather than apply blanket exclusions

For clarity:

Unsupervised work means any situation where a staff member or volunteer is working alone with families, children or under-18 volunteers, without another appropriately checked member of staff from Little Village on site directly overseeing activity. This includes one-to-one support conversations, being the only person covering a hub or activity space or directly supervising under-18 volunteers alone. **Unsupervised duties must not begin until all required safer recruitment and DBS checks for the role have been completed and cleared.**

A criminal record or positive DBS disclosure does not automatically prevent appointment. Decisions are made through a recorded risk process, see Recruitment of Employees and Volunteers with a Criminal Record Policy. Decisions relating to criminal record information or suitability concerns will be made fairly, proportionately and without unlawful discrimination.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Managers recruiting to roles are responsible for following this policy and associated operating procedures, including role risk assessment, appropriate checks and safe onboarding arrangements.

The People and Volunteering team oversee recruitment processes, coordinate checks and maintain records. For employed roles, the People team are involved in suitability and positive disclosure discussions to ensure decisions are made in line with legislative requirements and do not create discriminatory outcomes, in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy. For volunteer roles, the Volunteering team are involved to provide role context, supervision arrangements and operational insight, and to ensure decisions are proportionate, consistent and aligned with safer volunteering practice. The Safeguarding Manager provides advice where safeguarding or suitability concerns arise, including supporting with positive disclosures and risk decisions.

Anyone involved in recruitment must declare any close personal relationships with an applicant and step back from decision-making where appropriate.

6. Recruitment and selection process

Recruitment processes are structured and proportionate to the role. Role descriptions set out responsibilities, supervision and safeguarding expectations.

Recruitment materials and candidate communications include safeguarding and DBS expectations where relevant. Role descriptions, whether paid or voluntary and application forms state where DBS checks are required and include Little Village's safeguarding culture statement.

Selection methods may be proportionate to the role and may include structured applications, interviews, safeguarding questions, identity verification and DBS outcomes.

Applicants are informed at application and interview stage where roles are subject to DBS and where appropriate, any further pre-employment checks. Applicants are given the opportunity to disclose relevant information in advance. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent appointment.

Gaps in employment or volunteering history may be explored where relevant to role risk. Recruitment decisions are based on suitability, skills, experience and alignment with Little Village values.

Safeguarding and DBS requirements are communicated to candidates at multiple stages, including role descriptions, application forms, interview communications and where applicable, conditional offer letters.

Recruitment managers must complete the Safer Recruitment Checklist (Annex A) for all staff and volunteer roles and retain it on file as part of the recruitment record.

7. References and pre-appointment checks

Appropriate references are obtained for all paid and some volunteer roles before or shortly after appointment and before unsupervised activity begins in higher-risk roles.

Pre-appointment checks may include:

- references
- identity verifications
- right to work checks
- qualifications checks where relevant
- DBS checks where eligible, using the safeguarding role risk assessment tool for staff (Annex B) determine the appropriate level

No individual may begin unsupervised family-facing duties until required checks are completed and reviewed. Supervised or shadowed starts may be used where appropriate and recorded. Offers of appointment are conditional on satisfactory checks where required and if it is relevant to your role and level of check.

For the purpose of this policy: supervised means working where another appropriately checked staff member is present or providing direct oversight, activities take place in open or visible settings, and there is no sole responsibility for families, children or under-18 volunteers.

Unsupervised means working alone with families, children or under-18 volunteers, carrying out lone visits or deliveries, running family-facing activity without another checked adult present, or having sole responsibility for a space or interaction.

8. DBS checks and positive disclosures

DBS checks are carried out where roles meet eligibility criteria. The level of check is based on duties and contact, not employment status. Typical DBS levels by role type are set out in Annex B – safeguarding role assessment tool for safe.

DBS checks are required for both staff and volunteers only where roles meet eligibility criteria. For ongoing roles, DBS status is reviewed every three years. Where regular volunteers step away for a break from Little Village for a significant period and have decided to return to their volunteering duties, where applicable, DBS checks may need to be renewed.

Where DBS or other checks return information of concern, Little Village will carry out a proportionate, role-based risk assessment. This may include a discussion with the applicant and relevant staff (People or Volunteering team, hiring manager, and where appropriate the Safeguarding Manager).

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, considering relevance to the role, context, patterns, DBS filtering rules and level of risk. A disclosure alone will not automatically prevent appointment.

All positive disclosure risk assessments must be documented using the approved template set out in the Recruitment of Employees and Volunteers with a Criminal Record Policy and aligned with our Equal Opportunities commitments.

9. Induction and safeguarding training

All new staff and volunteers receive induction appropriate to their role. This includes safeguarding awareness training, reporting processes and expected standards of conduct and boundaries.

Safeguarding training is refreshed at least every two years, or sooner where role or guidance changes for staff and safeguarding awareness and/or induction is covered during volunteer onboarding. No individual in a DBS-eligible role will begin unsupervised duties until required clearance and onboarding safeguards are completed.

10. Data protection and process reviews

Recruitment and checking records are stored securely and handled in line with data protection requirements.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if safeguarding guidance, DBS requirements or operational learning indicates a need for change.

Annexes to this policy

- Annex A: Safer recruitment checklist (staff only)
- Annex B: Safeguarding role risk assessment tool (staff only)

Signed:

Sophie Livingstone,
CEO, Little Village

Reviewers:

Hinda Omar, Safeguarding and Family Insights Manager
Andrey Ashwell, Director of People
Kate Husselbee, Trustee

Review Date: March 2026

Annex A – Safer recruitment checklist for staff

Safe recruitment is not only about DBS checks. It includes clear role design, structured selection, appropriate checks, safeguarding communication and proportionate risk assessment.

The following checklist supports the recruiting of both staff and volunteers to ensure consistent safer recruitment steps. This checklist should also be completed and retained as part of the recruitment record.

Task	Completed
Clear role description and role profile created (duties, responsibilities, supervision, safeguarding expectations)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role risk assessment completed to determine appropriate DBS level (see Safer Recruitment Role Risk Assessment Tool). Correct DBS level applied for where eligible (Basic / Standard / Enhanced / Barred List)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment materials include safeguarding statement and DBS expectations where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application form used (not CV alone) to ensure consistent information gathered. Employment / volunteering history reviewed and gaps explored where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application includes suitability and safeguarding declaration questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structured interview held with planned questions (including safeguarding and values-based questions)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant asked about criminal convictions, cautions, restrictions or pending cases relevant to role suitability. Self-disclosure form used where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identity verified using photographic ID (passport, driving licence or equivalent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right to work check completed (staff roles only) & relevant qualifications verified where required for role	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum of two references requested and reviewed (including suitability to work with children / adults at risk where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive disclosure or concerning information risk assessed and recorded with People / Volunteering (for volunteer roles) and Safeguarding input	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conditional offer letter includes safeguarding and checks conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct provided and signed before start	<input type="checkbox"/>
Line manager identified and confirmed and role boundaries and supervision arrangements agreed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding training and induction completed before or at start of role	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsupervised family-facing work only begins after required checks cleared	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where concerns occur

If suitability concerns, disclosure information or safeguarding risks arise:

- People team involved (staff roles)
- Volunteering team involved (volunteer roles)
- Safeguarding Manager consulted
- Risk assessment recorded

- decision rationale documented

Record keeping

All safer recruitment and decisions must be recorded and stored securely in line with Data Protection and Retention Policy

Key guidance and legislation

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice
- UK Government DBS Eligibility Guidance and Eligibility Tool
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance for charities and trustees
- NSPCC Safer Recruitment Guidance
- NCVO Safer Recruitment of Volunteers guidance

Annex B – Safeguarding Role / Activity Risk Assessment Tool (staff only)

Purpose:

We use this short assessment to choose the right safer recruitment checks for each staff role. Not every role needs the same level of check. We look at contact with families, supervision, environment and access to sensitive information, and apply proportionate safeguarding controls.

1. Role Details

Role title:

Team:

Reports to:

Main setting: family services/ hub / warehouse / office / outreach / delivery / hybrid

Completed by:

Date:

Safeguarding Manager review needed: yes / no

2. Contact and exposure

Does this role have direct contact or realistic opportunity for contact with children, young people, parents or adults at risk through Little Village activity?

Tick all that apply:

- No contact and no realistic opportunity for contact
- Incidental or passing contact only (passing / environmental)
- Regular planned contact
- Digital or remote contact with families (phone, email, messaging or online platforms)
- Contact in service settings (hubs / deliveries / support calls)
- Contact with adults at risk (parents with vulnerabilities or active risks)
- Contact with children present with carers
- Home visits or delivery to family homes
- Contact with under-18 volunteers or placements
- Lone working where families may be present
- Access to safeguarding or sensitive family information)
- opportunity to receive safeguarding disclosures or case information (including digital contact)

3. Supervision context

Supervised = lower risk context

Open setting, no closed 1-1 contact, another vetted staff member leading/available.

Unsupervised = high risk context

1-1, lone visits/contact, closed settings, and/or sole adult responsible

- Always supervised
- Mixed supervised
- Unsupervised regularly

4. Frequency of contact

- None
- Incidental
- Occasional
- Regular
- Frequent/core part of role

5. Trust, access and responsibility factors

Does this role include any of the following?

- Position of trust or authority with families
- Giving advice or direct support to parents
- Handling safeguarding concerns
- Access to sensitive family data
- Supervising volunteers (including under-18s)
- Entering family homes
- Transporting families or young people

6. DBS level decision (section completed by People &/or Safeguarding)

Final decision made by People and Safeguarding.

Recommended DBS level:

- None
- Basic (default for most staff roles)
- Standard
- Enhanced
- Enhanced + Barred List (where legally eligible)

Eligibility confirmed: yes/no

Rationale 2-3 sentences:

contact + supervision + setting + access considered:

7. Additional recruitment safeguards

Apply where appropriate:

- Values-based interview questions
- Safeguarding interview scenario questions
- Two references checked
- Employment gaps explored
- ID and right-to-work verified
- Qualifications checked (if relevant)
- Role-appropriate online check
- Code of Conduct signed
- Safeguarding induction attended
- Safeguarding training e-learning and live training completed and induction
- Early probation supervision check-ins

8. Role design safeguards

Operational controls built into roles to reduce safeguarding risk and support safer working

Tick where these apply:

- No lone work with children
- Open or visible service settings
- Under-18s always supervised
- Work devices and approved systems are used for family communication and records (no storage of family images or information on personal devices)
- Clear escalation process
- Review access to Little Village database and relevant channels
- Incident report form process covered
- DSL advice easily available

Notes:

9. Overall safeguarding exposure

- Low (no direct family contact or supervised)
 - Moderate (some direct contact or access to sensitive data)
 - High (lone contact, disclosures likely, position of trust)
- Safeguarding managers sign off required: yes/no

Consistency guide (staff role example)		
Role	DBS level	Why
Warehouse assistant	Basic	Volunteer setting, supervised
Signposting & Guidance Lead	Enhanced	Direct disclosure likely, 1-1 lone working digital contact
Safeguarding Manager	Enhanced	Safeguarding decisions