

Pony Partnerships CIC



Safer Recruitment, DBS, and Vetting Policy 2026-2027

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

Date of Review: 1 September 2026

Date of Next Review: 31 August 2027

Author: Danielle Mills

1. Policy Statement

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk.

We recognise that safer recruitment is an essential part of safeguarding and helps prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining access to vulnerable people.

We are committed to recruiting staff, associates, volunteers, and directors who share our values and commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, professionalism, and animal welfare.

All recruitment decisions will be made fairly, consistently and in accordance with safeguarding, employment, and equality legislation.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- promote safe recruitment practices;
- support safeguarding and welfare;
- reduce the risk of unsuitable individuals gaining access to children or adults at risk;
- ensure appropriate vetting and suitability checks are completed;
- provide clear expectations for recruitment and selection processes;
- ensure compliance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- employees;
- associates;
- volunteers;
- directors;
- students and work placements;
- contractors undertaking regulated activities on behalf of Pony Partnerships CIC.

The level of recruitment and vetting undertaken will be proportionate to the nature of the role and the level

of contact with children, young people, and adults at risk.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant UK legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice relating to safer recruitment, safeguarding and criminal records checking.

This includes the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including Part Three: Safer Recruitment, the DBS Code of Practice, the Crime and Policing Act 2026, and legislation relating to safeguarding, equality, data protection, rehabilitation of offenders and criminal records checks.

Pony Partnerships CIC will comply with all legal requirements relating to safer recruitment, safeguarding, and suitability checks.

This policy will be reviewed to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, DBS requirements, and organisational practice.

5. Safer Recruitment Principles

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to:

- safeguarding being embedded throughout recruitment;
- selecting individuals who are suitable for their role;
- maintaining fair and transparent recruitment processes;
- verifying identity, qualifications, and experience;
- obtaining appropriate references;
- carrying out proportionate vetting checks;
- promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion;
- making recruitment decisions based on evidence and suitability.

Safeguarding considerations will form part of every recruitment process.

6. Recruitment Process

Recruitment processes will normally include:

- a clear role description;
- identification of safeguarding responsibilities;
- an application process;
- an interview or selection process;
- identity verification;
- reference checks;
- qualification checks where relevant;
- DBS checks where required;
- assessment of suitability for the role.

Candidates will be informed of Pony Partnerships CIC's commitment to safeguarding throughout the recruitment process.

7. References

References will normally be sought before an appointment is confirmed.

References should:

Pony Partnerships CIC (12448033) c/o 84 Cheal Close, Shardlow, Derby, DE72 2DY
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- be obtained from appropriate sources;
- relate to recent and relevant experience;
- be reviewed for any safeguarding concerns;
- be verified where necessary.

Any concerns arising from references will be explored before a final decision is made.

8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Pony Partnerships CIC will undertake DBS checks where required by legislation and the nature of the role.

The level of DBS check required will depend on:

- the duties of the role;
- the frequency and nature of contact with children or adults at risk;
- whether regulated activity is involved.

No individual will begin regulated activity until the safeguarding checks legally required for that role have been completed and assessed as satisfactory. Exceptionally, where it is lawful for a person to begin limited duties before all remaining checks are complete, this must be formally risk assessed, supervised and approved by the CEO/Manager or a Director. The arrangement must specify permitted and prohibited duties, supervision, outstanding checks and a review date.

9. Vetting and Suitability

In addition to DBS checks, Pony Partnerships CIC may undertake:

- identity verification;
- right to work checks;
- qualification verification;
- professional registration checks;
- employment history checks;
- reference checks;
- online searches where appropriate and lawful;
- other suitability checks relevant to the role.

Information obtained through vetting processes will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

10. Recruitment of Individuals with Criminal Convictions

Having a criminal record will not automatically prevent an individual from working or volunteering with Pony Partnerships CIC.

Each case will be considered individually, taking account of:

- the nature of the offence;
- the seriousness of the offence;
- the relevance to the role;
- the time elapsed since the offence;
- patterns of offending;
- evidence of rehabilitation;
- safeguarding considerations.

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Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to treating applicants fairly and in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and DBS guidance.

Further information is provided in Appendix 2.

11. Volunteers, Students and Work Placements

Pony Partnerships CIC recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers, students, and work placements.

Appropriate recruitment and suitability checks will be undertaken before individuals begin their placement.

The level of checking required will be proportionate to:

- the role undertaken;
- supervision arrangements;
- access to children, young people, or adults at risk;
- safeguarding responsibilities.

Pony Partnerships CIC will complete a written risk assessment when deciding what checks are required for volunteers who are not in regulated activity. A volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained must not be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Existing volunteers must be reviewed where their role now falls within regulated activity due to the Crime and Policing Act 2026 changes. Where this applies, Pony Partnerships will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. Supervision alone will not remove the need for an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information where the volunteer role meets the regulated activity threshold.

12. Contractors and Visitors

Where contractors, consultants or other external individuals may have access to children, young people or adults at risk, Pony Partnerships CIC will seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

This may include confirmation of:

- DBS status;
- supervision arrangements;
- safeguarding training;
- organisational safeguarding policies.

Where contractors, agency staff, trainees, or third-party staff work with or around children, Pony Partnerships CIC will seek written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding and vetting checks have been completed. Where a concern or allegation arises, Pony Partnerships will work with the relevant agency, employer, or training provider. Immediate protective action may be taken where required, but Pony Partnerships will not treat removal from provision as a substitute for appropriate fact-finding, recording and LADO consultation where the threshold may be met.

13. Induction, Training and Supervision

Successful applicants will receive induction appropriate to their role.

This will normally include:

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- safeguarding;
- professional boundaries;
- code of conduct;
- health and safety;
- equality, diversity, and inclusion;
- animal welfare;
- relevant organisational policies;
- KCSIE 2026 Part One, where relevant to role;
- low-level concerns, including self-referral;
- allegations involving staff, volunteers, trainees, contractors, and third-party workers;
- regulated activity changes affecting volunteers;
- allergy awareness and emergency response arrangements for staff, associates or volunteers working directly with participants.

Staff, associates, and volunteers will receive ongoing supervision and support appropriate to their responsibilities.

14. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Recruitment, DBS, and vetting information will be:

- handled confidentially;
- stored securely;
- retained only for as long as necessary;
- managed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Access to recruitment records will be restricted to authorised individuals.

Further information regarding DBS certificate handling is provided in Appendix A.

15. Responsibilities

- Board of Directors: Responsible for ensuring safer recruitment arrangements are in place and reviewed regularly.
- Directors/CEO: Responsible for ensuring recruitment processes comply with this policy.
- Staff Involved in Recruitment: Responsible for:
 - following safer recruitment procedures;
 - undertaking appropriate checks;
 - recording recruitment decisions;
 - escalating concerns appropriately.
- All Staff, Associates and Volunteers: Responsible for maintaining suitability for their role and reporting relevant safeguarding information appropriately.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- legislation changes;
- safeguarding guidance changes;
- organisational arrangements change;
- learning from safeguarding reviews or incidents identifies a need for review.

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Appendix 1 – DBS Certificate Handling Statement

Pony Partnerships CIC complies with the DBS Code of Practice.

DBS certificate information will:

- be handled fairly and lawfully;
- be used only for the purpose for which it was obtained;
- be stored securely;
- be accessible only to authorised individuals;
- not be retained for longer than necessary.

DBS certificate information will normally be destroyed securely after a maximum retention period of six months unless a longer retention period is required by law or justified by exceptional circumstances.

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Appendix 2 – Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Statement

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to the fair treatment of all applicants, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record will not automatically bar an individual from working or volunteering with Pony Partnerships CIC.

Where a disclosure is made, an individual risk assessment will be undertaken considering:

- the nature of the role;
- the nature and relevance of the offence;
- the time elapsed since the offence;
- patterns of behaviour;
- evidence of rehabilitation;
- safeguarding considerations.

Decisions will be made fairly, consistently and in accordance with relevant legislation and safeguarding responsibilities.

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