



## Safer Recruitment Policy

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| Version:          | <b>2.0 September 2026</b>                                |
| Review Cycle:     | Annually                                                 |
| Approved by:      | Board of Trustees                                        |
| Policy Owner:     | Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Board of Trustees |
| Next Review Date: | September 2027                                           |



## 1. Policy Statement

Autism Angels is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, trustees and those working on our behalf to share this commitment.

The safety and wellbeing of children is paramount. Autism Angels will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and will operate robust safer recruitment procedures in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**, the **Children Act 1989 and 2004**, the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975**, and other relevant safeguarding and employment legislation.

As an outdoor therapeutic and alternative provision supporting neurodivergent children and young people, Autism Angels recognises that effective safer recruitment is an essential part of creating a safe culture and protecting those who access our services.

## 2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children;
- Safer recruitment procedures are designed not only to identify individuals who may pose a risk of harm to children and young people, but also to deter unsuitable individuals from applying for roles within Autism Angels;
- ensure that recruitment decisions are based on safeguarding and suitability;
- ensure that all required pre-employment and pre-engagement checks are completed;
- maintain a culture of vigilance throughout recruitment and employment;
- ensure that volunteers are recruited and supported safely and appropriately;
- comply with statutory safeguarding and recruitment requirements.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- employees (paid staff);
- volunteers;
- trustees;
- students on placement;
- work experience placements;
- and any other adult engaged by Autism Angels who may have contact with children.



#### 4. Safer Recruitment Principles

Autism Angels will ensure that safeguarding is embedded throughout the recruitment process.

Recruitment procedures will include:

- a clear role description and person specification;
- safeguarding responsibilities included within role descriptions where appropriate;
- an application process appropriate to the role;
- discussion of safeguarding responsibilities during recruitment;
- appropriate verification of identity and suitability;
- required statutory checks before an individual begins regulated activity;
- induction and safeguarding training;
- ongoing supervision and monitoring.

##### 4.1 Autism Angels Recruitment Approach

Autism Angels recognises that the strength of our organisation comes from the lived experience, knowledge and understanding of the community we serve. Our recruitment approach is therefore often **bespoke, relationship-based and organic**, reflecting the way in which many members of our team have developed through long-term involvement with Autism Angels.

Many of our staff and volunteers:

- are neurodivergent themselves;
- have previously accessed Autism Angels' services;
- are parents, carers or family members of neurodivergent children and young people;
- or bring significant lived and professional experience of autism, ADHD, trauma, anxiety, SEND or alternative education.

We value this lived experience as an important part of our therapeutic and trauma-informed approach.

Autism Angels is committed to **equal opportunities and inclusive recruitment**. In line with the Equality Act 2010, recruitment processes may be adapted to meet an individual's needs, communication style, neurodivergence, disability or personal circumstances. As a result, the way in which applications, interviews, or recruitment conversations are undertaken may vary from one candidate to another.

For example, recruitment may involve:

- informal recruitment conversations;
- taster and practical trial sessions
- supported interview/conversations;
- phased volunteering prior to employment;



- internal progression from volunteer or participant roles;
- or alternative methods of demonstrating suitability and experience.

These adaptations are intended to remove barriers to participation and ensure that talented individuals are not excluded by traditional recruitment methods.

**No adaptation to the recruitment process will compromise Autism Angels' safeguarding responsibilities.** All appointments remain subject to appropriate safer recruitment procedures, including the statutory safeguarding checks required for the role, assessment of suitability to work with children, and compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and other relevant legislation.

## **5. Recruitment Process**

### **5.1 Recruitment Documentation**

Where appropriate, recruitment documentation will include:

- application forms;
- role descriptions;
- person specifications;
- and reference requests.

Autism Angels will seek sufficient information to assess an individual's suitability to work with children and young people.

### **5.2 References and Verification**

Where applicable to the role and the individual's circumstances, references will be sought for prospective staff, volunteers and others engaged by Autism Angels as part of the assessment of their suitability to work with children and young people.

References will normally be obtained directly from the referee rather than relying on references supplied by the applicant. Where possible and appropriate, a reference will be sought from the current or most recent employer and, where relevant, from the most recent organisation in which the individual worked or volunteered with children.

Upon receipt of a reference, Autism Angels will make appropriate contact with the referee or issuing organisation to confirm that the reference is genuine, has been provided by the stated person and originates from a legitimate source. Any unclear, incomplete or inconsistent information will be followed up before an appointment or placement is confirmed.

Information provided in references will be considered alongside the application, recruitment discussions/interview, employment or volunteering history, statutory checks and Autism Angels' own knowledge of the individual where relevant. Any discrepancies or safeguarding concerns will be explored and resolved satisfactorily before the individual undertakes unsupervised regulated activity.

### 5.3 Interviews and Selection

Where interviews are conducted, at least one member of the recruitment process will have appropriate safer recruitment knowledge or training.

Selection processes will include consideration of:

- experience working with children or vulnerable individuals;
- understanding of safeguarding responsibilities;
- employment history where applicable;
- gaps in employment where relevant;
- and any information arising from references or checks.

### 6. Pre-Employment and Pre-Engagement Checks

Before any individual undertakes regulated activity, Autism Angels will complete the checks required for the role.

These include:

- **Enhanced DBS check;**
- **Children's Barred List check** where the role involves regulated activity;
- **Identity verification;**
- **Right to work in the UK check;**
- **Reference checks** where appropriate;
- **Qualification checks** where relevant;
- **Prohibition checks** for teaching staff where applicable;
- and any other checks required by legislation or commissioning requirements.

Individuals will not begin unsupervised regulated activity until all required safeguarding checks and safeguarding training have been satisfactorily completed.

### 7. Single Central Record (SCR)

Autism Angels will maintain a **Single Central Record (SCR)** containing the required recruitment and safeguarding checks for relevant staff, trustees and volunteers in accordance with KCSIE requirements.

The SCR will be securely maintained and made available for inspection by authorised bodies when required.

A redacted copy may be provided to commissioning authorities where appropriate.



## 8. Safer Recruitment of Volunteers

### 8.1 Our Volunteer Model

Volunteers are an important part of Autism Angels' work and contribute significantly to our therapeutic, educational and community activities.

Our volunteering programme is designed as a **pathway for young people within our community to explore routes into employment, enterprise and volunteering.**

Autism Angels recognises that many of our volunteers are themselves **neurodivergent** and may require reasonable adjustments, additional support or adapted recruitment processes.

### 8.2 Volunteer Checks

All volunteers will:

- have references sought and verified where applicable to their role and circumstances;
- be subject to an **Enhanced DBS check where appropriate**;
- receive safeguarding induction before beginning their role;
- understand Autism Angels' safeguarding policies and procedures;
- know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns;
- be appropriately supervised;
- receive training appropriate to their role;
- work within clear role boundaries;
- and receive ongoing support, oversight and development.

Where a volunteer is under the age of 18, Autism Angels will ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place and that the role is suitable for their age and experience.

### 8.3 Volunteers Progressing from Autism Angels Services

Many of our volunteers have previously accessed Autism Angels' services and began working and learning with us as teenagers, always under direct supervision.

For these volunteers, Autism Angels may not seek external employment references where:

- they entered the organisation as young people;
- Autism Angels has had a long-standing and substantial direct relationship with them;
- their development, conduct, reliability and suitability have been observed over a significant period;
- and safeguarding oversight has been maintained throughout their involvement.

In such circumstances, Autism Angels will rely on:

- documented knowledge of the individual;



- observations from senior leadership team;
- supervision records where available;
- safeguarding history within the organisation;
- DBS and other statutory checks where required;
- and a formal assessment of suitability before undertaking any role involving contact with children.

This approach reflects the unique nature of Autism Angels' volunteer pathway while maintaining compliance with safeguarding responsibilities and KCSIE principles.

## **9. Trustees**

Trustees who engage in regulated activity or whose role requires safeguarding checks will undergo the appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures, including DBS checks where required.

All trustees will receive safeguarding information and understand their governance responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

## **10. Visitors and External Professionals**

Autism Angels will ensure that any external professionals working with children are subject to appropriate safeguarding arrangements and will be supervised at all times regardless of their role or position.

## **11. Induction**

All new staff and volunteers will receive an induction that includes:

- Autism Angels' Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies;
- reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns;
- whistleblowing procedures;
- professional conduct expectations;
- health and safety arrangements;
- and role-specific safeguarding responsibilities.

## **12. Training**

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Autism Angels requires **annual safeguarding refresher training** for all team members and volunteers.

Additional training may be provided in areas including:

- safer working practices;

- trauma-informed practice;
- neurodiversity awareness;
- online safety;
- Prevent;
- first aid;
- horse care and management
- any other training applicable to the role

### **13. Ongoing Monitoring**

Safer recruitment does not end when recruitment is complete.

Autism Angels will maintain ongoing vigilance through:

- regular supervision;
- safeguarding discussions;
- training updates;
- observation of practice;
- appropriate performance management;
- and prompt investigation of any safeguarding concerns.

Any concern regarding any individual's suitability to work with children will be managed in accordance with Autism Angels' safeguarding procedures and relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) processes where appropriate.

### **14. Record Keeping**

Recruitment records will be maintained securely in accordance with UK GDPR and data protection legislation.

Records will include, where appropriate:

- application documentation;
- interview notes where applicable;
- references;
- DBS information (recording the certificate number, date and outcome where permitted);
- identity verification;
- right to work evidence;
- qualification verification;
- and induction/training records.

### **15. Letter of Assurance**

Autism Angels can provide written assurance to commissioning authorities and partner organisations that:



- Identity checks and Enhanced DBS checks are carried out for relevant team members and volunteers;
- Children's Barred List checks are completed where required for regulated activity;
- Teacher qualification and prohibition checks are completed where applicable;
- A current Single Central Record is maintained and a redacted copy is available on request;
- All team members and volunteers complete annual safeguarding training;
- Autism Angels complies with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations;
- Written health and safety policies and risk assessments are available for inspection on request;
- Appropriate Employers' Liability and Public Liability insurance is maintained;
- Trained first aiders are present during operational activities;
- Autism Angels is subject to annual quality assurance inspections by North Yorkshire Council Inclusion Team for inclusion within the Alternative Provision Directory;
- and Autism Angels is also subject to annual inspections by North Yorkshire Council Licensing Services in relation to its licensed equine activities.

## **16. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding practice, or the operational requirements of Autism Angels.