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Approved by

Name: Jake Sexton



Role: Head of People and CCO

## INTRODUCTION


The safe recruitment of staff in PET-Xi's is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children or vulnerable adults in education. PET-Xi is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners in its care. As an employer, PET-Xi expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment in creating a culture of safeguarding.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy are to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse learners or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of PET-Xi's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and

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- to ensure that PET-Xi meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children or vulnerable adults and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

PET-Xi has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at PET-Xi based on the applicant’s abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2023, GDPR Legislation and Prevent Duty Guidance and internal Safeguarding policies).

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual’s application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

PET-Xi aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at PET-Xi and relevant to completing the Single Central Register(SCR) requirements.


## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES**

It is the responsibility of the Head of People (Jake Sexton) to:

- ensure all staff involved in recruitment activity undertake safer recruitment training.
- ensure PET-Xi has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- monitor PET-Xi’s compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the CEO (Fleur Sexton), the Head of People and other Managers involved in recruitment to:

- ensure that PET-Xi operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at PET-Xi
- monitor contractors’, sub-contractors’, associate trainers’ and agencies’ compliance with this document
- promote welfare of children or vulnerable adults and young people at every stage of the procedure.
- Executive Leadership Team may be involved in staff appointments but the final decision will rest with each Centre Manager in Coventry, Nuneaton, Leamington or Sheffield offices.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of People to maintain and update the SCR.

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## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

### Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, PET-Xi will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible; normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear PET-Xi's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children or vulnerable adults.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

### Application Forms

PET-Xi uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration ( Self Declaration) regarding convictions and working with children or vulnerable adults and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for PET-Xi to employ anyone who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults to apply for a position at PET-Xi. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.


### Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults in a boarding environment.

### Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers (of which a minimum of one will have undertaken safer recruitment training) will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or

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gaps have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has not been disclosed on the application form.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original document will only be accepted, and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed six months after the recruitment programme.

Key staff members, including the People and Recruitment Departments will undergo Safer Recruitment Training.

Where there are senior roles, there must be a panel of three ELT members, consisting of the Department Head, HR and another ELT member. The panel must agree on the questions and scoring/assessment format for the interview. The highest scoring candidate who is appropriate for the role will likely be chosen.


## Recruitment

Recruiting staff may make limited enquiries about health or disability and can only ask about health or disability:

- to help decide if you can carry out a task that is an essential part of the work
- to help find out if you can take part in an interview
- to help decide if the interviewers need to make reasonable adjustments for you in a selection process
- to help monitoring
- if they want to increase the number of disabled people they employ
- if they need to know for the purposes of national security checks

We may ask whether a health condition or disability needs to be taken into consideration on an application form or in an interview, but we will consider if a question is one that is allowed to be asked at that stage of recruitment.

As part of the recruitment process an internet search of popular social media sites will be carried out to ensure nothing inappropriate is found. We encourage all staff to ensure a secure and discrete online presence due to their work with young and vulnerable people and learners. We would seek to not recruit an individual with adult content available online or illegal or defamatory information which the individual has featured or endorsed online.

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## References

References for shortlisted applicants will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after an offer of employment.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by PET-Xi. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children or vulnerable adults, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children or vulnerable adults. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

A third reference may be requested for the following circumstances; required by a risk assessment, unable to obtain an overseas check or limited details from the two references already provided.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.


Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with any character references to verify the reference.

PET-Xi does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives. Internal references can be provided by a member of SLT if an Self-employed staff member has worked for the company for a period of three years or longer.

## Online Checks

PEY-Xi now carries out online searches as part of the safer recruitment process. Therefore:

- All shortlisted candidates will have an internet search and any concerns will be raised. Candidates are notified this at the earliest opportunity.
- The application form advises candidates that an internet search will be carried out as part of the recruitment process.
- Any concerns with the online searches will be raised immediately to the Head of People or/and the Safeguarding Team, where appropriate action will be taken.
- A record of the online search will be stored in the successful candidates HR file and logged on the Single Central Register.

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## Overseas checks

Where a tutor has lived or worked outside of the UK for a period longer than 3 months or more in a period of 10 years, overseas checks will be required. This must include an overseas criminal record check from the country they resided in.


- We will follow the guidance on how to apply for these checks found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). and evidence that all avenues have been exhausted in trying to obtain these checks.
- If it is evidenced that this cannot be done, sufficient mitigations (including a third reference) as well as a full risk assessment will be completed that support informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment.
- The requirement for the purpose of recruitment will be to establish whether the tutor has at any point received any relevant overseas cautions or convictions.
- Such overseas checks will be required so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.
- PET-Xi, in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals.
- The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by PET-Xi.

## OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE 2023 and the requirements of the Education Regulations 2021, PET-Xi carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating PET-Xi's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which PET-Xi considers to be satisfactory;
- for positions which involve "teaching work":
  - i. PET-Xi being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at PET-Xi or which, in PET-Xi's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at PET-Xi; and
  - ii. PET-Xi being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at

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PET-Xi or which, in PET-Xi's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at PET-Xi;

- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which PET-Xi considers to be satisfactory;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children or vulnerable adults Barred List\*;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which PET-Xi deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).
- Completed of annual safeguarding and prevent training.

\*PET-Xi is not permitted to check the Children or vulnerable adults Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". PET-Xi is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and Managers who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, PET-Xi can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by PET-Xi in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases PET-Xi will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children Barred List check.


A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

#### **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to learners. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at PET-Xi.

#### **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)**

PET-Xi applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children or vulnerable adults Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at PET-Xi which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by inclusion on the Children or vulnerable adults Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

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It is PET-Xi's policy to re-check employee's DBS Certificates every two years where staff have not subscribed to the DBS update service. A regular health check will be conducted of those members of staff subscribed to the update service by the Chief Commercial Officer, Jake Sexton. In addition, any employee that takes leave for more than three months (ie: maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Members of staff at PET-Xi are aware of their obligation to inform the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

### **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff are required to join the DBS Update Service. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant, in some circumstances this fee could be reclaimed from PET-Xi Training Ltd.

### **DBS Certificate**

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to the Human Resources Department, (for employees within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity).

### **Name changes**

A new DBS is not necessary if we know who they are and are aware of the name change when updating staff records such as payroll and HR files, so a new check is not needed. However when the time comes to get a new DBS check on all our staff, the person in question should be included, the check will be applied for using their new legal name.

Associates will either need to create a new DBS online application with the updated name or use the DBS Update Service.

The DBS need to know all of the names which have previously been used, so if changing a surname on marriage, the birth surname will need to be provided too. People who have changed their names by deed poll should give their full previous name too.


### **Dealing with convictions**

PET-Xi operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the General Manager and Head of HR. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information



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(whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, with the General Manager and Head of HR will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, PET-Xi may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

### **Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)**

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Employer Access Online Service. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a trainer in such a setting.

### **Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status**

All applicants invited to attend an interview at PET-Xi will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence, visa and proof of national insurance number etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006/Immigration act 2016 and DBS identity checking guidelines. PET-Xi does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.


In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

### **Medical Fitness**

PET-Xi is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at PET-Xi, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

PET-Xi is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

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### **Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify PET-Xi policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Conduct and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

### **Single Central Register of Members of Staff**

In addition to the various staff records kept at head office and on individual personnel files, a single central register of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education Regulations 2014 requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Head of HR. The single central register will contain details of the following:-

- All employees who are employed to work at PET-Xi;
- All employees who are employed as supply staff to PET-Xi whether employed directly or through an agency;
- All others who have been chosen by PET-Xi to work in regular contact with children or vulnerable adults. This will cover volunteers, peripatetic staff and people brought into PET-Xi to provide additional teaching or instruction for learners but who are not staff members e.g.: sports coaches etc.
- All sub-contract associate trainers.

The Quality and Compliance Officer, Susan O'Neill will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register and reporting his/her findings to SLT during review meetings.


### **Record Retention / Data Protection**

PET-Xi is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, PET-Xi will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help PET-Xi to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the PET-Xi may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by PET-Xi for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with PET-Xi. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Office in a locked and secure cabinet, or digital documentation will be in a restricted area with limited access and PDF restricted editing.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with PET-Xi activities.

PET-Xi will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

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### **Ongoing Employment**

PET-Xi recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. PET-XI will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

### **Leaving Employment at PET-Xi**

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children or vulnerable adults and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks PET-Xi also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at PET-Xi despite being barred from working with children or vulnerable adults; or
- has been removed by PET-Xi from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable person.
- If the individual referred to the DBS is a trainer, PET-Xi may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

### **Contractors and agency staff**

Contractors engaged by PET-Xi must complete the same checks for their employees that PET-Xi is required to complete for its staff. PET-Xi requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at PET-Xi.

Agencies who supply staff to PET-Xi must also complete the pre-employment checks which PET-Xi would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, PET-Xi requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at PET-Xi


PET-XI will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at PET-Xi.

### **Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)**

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires PET-Xi to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by learners, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

PET-XI is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children or vulnerable adults Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at PET-Xi or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of PET-Xi.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the PET-Xi's usual visitors signing in protocol. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

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PET-Xi will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend PET-Xi. In doing so PET-Xi will always have regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism".

*"Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."*

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations PET-Xi does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

### **Volunteers**

PET-Xi will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children or vulnerable adults Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with learners at or on behalf of PET-Xi (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will PET-Xi permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with learners.

It is the PET-Xi's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with PET-Xi for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with PET-Xi on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits PET-Xi to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition, PET-Xi will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to) the following:


- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

A volunteer risk assessment must be completed and signed by the Head of People before a volunteer can start volunteering.

### **Induction**

All staff undergo an induction on their first day which covers the following:

- Safeguarding briefing by a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Health & Safety briefing by the Health and Safety Officer.
- People briefing by the People Administrator

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### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head of HR will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout PET-Xi. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit carried out by the Quality and Compliance Officer which will be presented to the CEO (Fleur Sexton) and the Head of HR.

### **Related Documents**

- Safeguarding policy
- Prevent policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Professional development policy
- Quality strategy