



Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

Actcessible is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and representative environment where all participants, especially children, young people, and adults at risk, are protected from harm. This policy outlines how we recruit safely and responsibly, in line with safeguarding law and guidance, our values of inclusion and dignity, and our commitment to accessibility and equal opportunities.

This policy applies to trustees, staff, freelance creatives, contractors, and volunteers engaged by Actcessible.

2. Key Principles

- We ensure that all individuals representing Actcessible are suitable for their roles and share our values of access, inclusion, and safeguarding.
- We use fair, transparent, proportionate, and inclusive recruitment methods that reduce the risk of unsuitable individuals being engaged.
- Safer recruitment is an ongoing process and includes appropriate induction, supervision, monitoring, and review after appointment.
- Feedback from beneficiaries, audiences, and partner organisations is welcomed and may contribute to performance and safeguarding review.
- We have regard to current relevant legislation and guidance, including Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education where relevant to work in education settings, current Prevent duty guidance where applicable, Charity Commission safeguarding guidance, and guidance and codes of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- We only request criminal record checks at a level that the role is legally eligible for.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

As a registered charity working with children, young people, and adults at risk, Actcessible has a legal and ethical duty to recruit safely and transparently. The Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and other designated personnel are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented in practice and regularly reviewed.

Actcessible is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with relevant safeguarding law, charity law, data protection law, and guidance issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service, the Charity Commission, and other relevant bodies.
- Embedding safeguarding, equality, accessibility, and dignity into every stage of recruitment, induction, supervision, and review.
- Clearly defining roles, responsibilities, supervision arrangements, and safeguarding expectations in job descriptions, role descriptions, and freelance briefs.
- Assessing every role individually to determine which identity checks, references, criminal record checks, barred list checks, trustee eligibility checks, qualification checks, and other checks are appropriate and lawful.
- Maintaining secure and confidential recruitment records in line with data protection law and Actcessible policies.
- Providing safeguarding induction and appropriate access guidance before an individual begins relevant duties.
- Monitoring and responding to concerns relating to conduct, suitability, safeguarding, or professional boundaries throughout an engagement.
- Reviewing this policy annually or sooner following significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational practice.

The leadership team and Board of Trustees are committed to maintaining a culture of safety, inclusion, accountability, and integrity in all recruitment and engagement activity.

4. Recruitment Procedures

4.1 Advertising

Actcessible promotes equality of opportunity, safeguarding, and inclusive practice from the first point of contact. Job adverts, freelance briefs, and volunteer recruitment materials will:

- Clearly state our commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- Encourage applications from underrepresented groups, including disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and global majority applicants.
- Highlight Actcessible values of access, inclusion, safety, dignity, and professional conduct.
- Explain how applicants can request reasonable adjustments during recruitment.
- State that identity, references, safeguarding checks, and criminal record checks may be required according to the duties of the role and legal eligibility.
- State where a role is expected to involve regulated activity and may therefore require an Enhanced DBS check with the relevant barred list information.
- Be published in accessible formats and, where appropriate, across platforms and networks that reach diverse applicants.
- Avoid unnecessary barriers, including academic or professional requirements that are not essential to the role.
- Use clear and understandable language.

Recruitment materials will be reviewed by an appropriate senior member of the organisation or a designated trustee before publication.

4.2 Job Descriptions and Role Specifications

Every role, whether employed, voluntary, freelance, contracted, or governance based, will be clearly defined to support safeguarding, equality, and accessibility from the outset.

For staff, governance, administrative, and volunteer roles, role documentation will:

- Outline the main duties and responsibilities.
- Explain the expected level of contact with children, young people, or adults at risk.
- Identify whether the duties may constitute regulated activity.
- State the level of DBS check that may be required, subject to legal eligibility.
- Describe safeguarding responsibilities and reporting expectations.
- Define reporting lines and supervision arrangements.
- Reflect Accessible commitments to inclusion, dignity, access, and professional boundaries.
- Provide clear information about time commitment, location, and practical expectations.

Person specifications will distinguish essential and desirable criteria, focus on experience and values relevant to the role, avoid unnecessary qualification requirements, use inclusive language, and confirm that reasonable adjustments are available.

For freelance creative roles such as actors, directors, and workshop leaders, a creative brief or freelance role specification may be used instead of a formal job description. It will explain the project, intended audience, creative context, safeguarding expectations, access requirements, professional standards, supervision arrangements, and the checks required before engagement.

Applicants for creative roles may be offered flexible application formats including written submissions, video, BSL, audio, or other accessible formats.

4.3 References

References form an important part of safer recruitment and will be proportionate to the nature, duration, supervision, and safeguarding risk of the role.

For staff, trustees, volunteers, and freelancers in ongoing, unsupervised, or higher responsibility roles:

- Normally two references will be requested.
- Referees should be able to comment on conduct, reliability, and suitability for the role.
- Where possible, at least one referee should be a recent employer, line manager, tutor, supervisor, or other suitable professional contact.
- Family members and close personal friends will not normally be accepted as professional referees.
- References will normally be requested in writing and may be followed up where safeguarding relevance is high or clarification is required.
- Discrepancies, vague responses, unexplained gaps, or safeguarding concerns will be explored before appointment.
- No individual will begin unsupervised regulated activity until the required references and safeguarding checks for that role have been completed satisfactorily.

For short term, one off, or fully supervised freelance creative work, Actcessible may use a proportionate combination of professional references, verified identity, lawful DBS information, professional history, recent testimonials, and a declaration of suitability. Where duties amount to regulated activity or involve unsupervised access, the full checks required for that role will be completed before the activity begins.

If suitable references are unavailable, Actcessible will document the reason, assess the risk, carry out appropriate alternative checks, and may decline or restrict the engagement if sufficient assurance cannot be obtained.

4.4 Auditions, Interviews, and Applicant Review

Actcessible uses recruitment methods that are appropriate to the role while maintaining consistent safeguarding standards.

Freelance creative applicants may be recruited through a submission based process. Submissions will normally be reviewed by at least two suitably experienced reviewers, which may include the Artistic Director, Theatrical Advisor, a project lead, or another designated person.

Applicants may be invited to provide:

- A short performance video, audition recording, showreel, or equivalent work sample.
- An introduction explaining their approach to inclusive practice and safeguarding, in an accessible format of their choice.
- A brief CV or summary of relevant experience where available.

Reviewers will consider creative quality, communication, audience sensitivity, safeguarding awareness, professionalism, adaptability, and alignment with Actcessible values.

Applicants may request a face to face or live video audition where preferred. Reasonable adjustments will be offered without penalty.

Administrative, governance, safeguarding, and other non creative roles will normally use a structured interview process with at least two panel members. Where appropriate, at least one panel member will have safer recruitment training or relevant safeguarding experience.

Interview questions may include values led and scenario based questions that allow applicants to demonstrate their approach to inclusion, boundaries, safeguarding, communication, and professional conduct.

4.5 Conditional Offers and Pre Engagement Checks

Offers of employment, freelance engagement, volunteering, or appointment are conditional on satisfactory completion of the checks that are appropriate and lawful for the role.

Before confirming an appointment, Actcessible may:

- Verify identity using documents accepted under the relevant checking process.

- Complete right to work checks for employees and for other engagements where such checks are legally required.
- Obtain the references required for the role.
- Determine the legally permitted DBS level for the role and obtain the relevant check where required.
- Obtain barred list information only where the role is regulated activity and the organisation is legally entitled to request it.
- Confirm trustee eligibility and obtain a signed declaration of non disqualification before trustee appointment.
- Check qualifications, professional status, licences, or registrations where they are essential to the role.
- Consider appropriate overseas criminal record information where relevant and reasonably obtainable.
- Review any legally disclosable criminal record information in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Exceptions Order, current filtering rules, and DBS guidance.

No individual may begin unsupervised regulated activity or other duties requiring completed safeguarding clearance until the checks required for that role have been completed and assessed as satisfactory.

4.6 Criminal Record Information and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

Actcessible will only ask applicants to disclose criminal record information that it is legally entitled to request for the particular role.

For roles not covered by an exception, applicants will not be required to disclose spent convictions or cautions that the law protects from disclosure. For roles that are legally eligible for a Standard or Enhanced DBS check, Actcessible may ask about criminal record information that can lawfully be considered, subject to current filtering rules.

Protected cautions and convictions will not be requested or taken into account. The existence of a criminal record will not automatically prevent appointment.

4.7 Dealing with Disclosed Criminal Record Information

Where a lawful DBS check or applicant disclosure contains information that may be relevant to the role, the information will be reviewed confidentially by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and an appropriate senior decision maker. The Chair of Trustees may be involved where necessary.

The applicant will normally be offered a confidential opportunity to explain the circumstances and provide relevant context.

A documented risk assessment will consider:

- The relevance of the information to the duties of the role.
- The nature and seriousness of the conduct.
- The time that has passed and any evidence of rehabilitation.

- The level of contact with children or adults at risk.
- The degree of supervision and access to confidential information.
- Any legal restrictions, barring information, or safeguarding concerns.

The decision may be to proceed, proceed with proportionate safeguards or role adjustments, or withdraw the offer where the risk cannot be safely managed.

If an applicant disputes information on a DBS certificate, Actcessible will allow the applicant to use the official DBS dispute process and will normally pause the final decision while the dispute is considered, unless immediate safeguarding action is required.

4.8 Identity, Qualifications, and Professional Status

Applicants will be required to provide evidence appropriate to the checks being completed. This may include identity documents, evidence of name changes, qualifications, professional registrations, licences, or other role specific evidence.

Where a qualification or professional status is legally or operationally essential, Actcessible will verify it before the individual carries out the relevant duties.

4.9 Overseas Checks

A UK DBS check does not provide a complete record of criminal history from other countries. Where an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK and the nature of the role makes further checking proportionate, Actcessible may request an overseas criminal record check, certificate of good conduct, professional reference, or other suitable evidence where available.

The extent of overseas checking will be based on the role, the period and country of residence, the reliability and availability of records, safeguarding risk, and any requirements of a partner setting or relevant statutory guidance.

Where an overseas check cannot reasonably be obtained, the reasons and any alternative safeguards will be documented before a decision is made.

4.10 Leaving Employment or Engagement

When a staff member, trustee, volunteer, contractor, or freelance practitioner leaves Actcessible, the charity will take reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding concerns are appropriately addressed and recorded.

- Individuals should provide appropriate notice where possible.
- Access to confidential data, email accounts, portals, keys, equipment, and organisational systems will be removed or returned as appropriate.
- An exit discussion may be offered to support reflection and organisational learning.
- Relevant conduct, safeguarding records, and outstanding concerns will be reviewed to identify any further action required.
- Departure or resignation will not prevent Actcessible from completing a safeguarding investigation or making a statutory referral where the legal threshold is met.

5. Duty to Refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Actcessible recognises that organisations providing regulated activity have a legal duty to refer certain cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service when the statutory referral conditions are met.

A referral will be considered where an individual has been removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, and there is relevant conduct, harm, risk of harm, or another statutory condition requiring referral.

Referrals will be coordinated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another appropriately authorised person, with trustee oversight where required. Records will be retained securely and the relevant statutory guidance will be followed.

6. Role Specific Recruitment Requirements

6.1 All Roles

- Identity will be verified to a level appropriate to the role and the checks being carried out.
- Applicants will only be asked for criminal record information that Actcessible is legally entitled to obtain.
- References will be requested and verified according to the duties, duration, supervision, and safeguarding risk of the role.
- A probationary, trial, introductory, or review period may be used where appropriate.
- Trustee appointments will include the required eligibility and disqualification checks.

6.2 Freelance Creative Roles

Freelance creative professionals are central to Actcessible work in schools, hospitals, community settings, and performance spaces. Recruitment will remain accessible and flexible while applying safeguarding checks proportionate to the duties involved.

Before an engagement begins, Actcessible will complete the identity, reference, DBS, barred list, qualification, right to work, and other checks that are legally appropriate and required for the particular role.

No freelance creative, contractor, or agency worker may begin unsupervised regulated activity until the required checks have been completed and approved.

Audition and recruitment materials will be stored securely and used only for recruitment and safeguarding purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and retention arrangements.

6.3 Administrative and Governance Roles

- Applicants may be asked for a CV, supporting statement, application form, or other accessible equivalent.
- Shortlisted candidates will normally be invited to an interview in person or online.

- Trustees must complete the required eligibility and declaration processes before appointment.
- Any DBS check for a trustee or governance role will only be requested where the role is legally eligible for that level of check.

7. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

- Each role will be assessed against current DBS eligibility guidance before a Standard, Enhanced, or Enhanced with Barred List check is requested.
- An Enhanced DBS check with relevant barred list information will only be requested where the duties amount to regulated activity and the organisation is legally entitled to obtain that information.
- Where a role is not eligible for a Standard or Enhanced check, Actaccessible may consider a Basic DBS check where lawful, proportionate, and justified by risk assessment.
- No individual will begin unsupervised regulated activity until the legally required clearance has been completed.
- Actaccessible may use the DBS Update Service where the individual has subscribed, the organisation has consent, and it remains legally entitled to check that certificate for the role.
- Periodic DBS review will be based on the nature and risk of the role, legal requirements, changes in duties, partner setting requirements, safeguarding concerns, and Update Service information. There is no automatic assumption that every role requires a new certificate after a fixed period.
- Personnel are expected to disclose relevant changes in circumstances where required by law, contract, policy, or the conditions of their role.
- DBS certificate information will be handled securely and confidentially in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and Actaccessible data protection arrangements.

8. Induction and Training

All new appointees will receive induction appropriate to their role. This may include:

- Reading and confirming understanding of the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Data Protection Policy, and other relevant policies.
- Completing safeguarding induction before beginning relevant duties.
- Receiving information about reporting concerns, professional boundaries, accessibility, and expected conduct.
- Completing additional role specific training where needed, including disability awareness, inclusive communication, BSL, Braille awareness, mental health awareness, or other project specific training.

9. Monitoring and Supervision

- Staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors, and freelancers will receive supervision appropriate to their role and level of risk.

- Concerns regarding conduct, capability, boundaries, or suitability will be addressed promptly through the appropriate safeguarding, conduct, complaints, or governance process.
- Contracts and agreements may permit suspension, restriction of duties, or termination where safeguarding concerns require immediate protective action.
- Feedback may be sought from beneficiaries, audiences, partner settings, and other stakeholders to evaluate safe and effective practice.
- Monitoring information may include attendance, feedback, incident information, supervision notes, and anonymised evaluation data where appropriate.

10. Commitment to Equality and Accessibility

- Actaccessible warmly encourages applications from disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, global majority, and otherwise underrepresented people.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout recruitment, audition, interview, induction, and onboarding processes.
- Application and audition formats will be adaptable to support access needs.
- Recruitment decisions will be based on the requirements of the role, safeguarding, competence, values, and fair assessment.

11. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- Recruitment information, references, identity information, criminal record information, audition materials, and safeguarding records will be handled in accordance with Actaccessible data protection and confidentiality requirements.
- Access will be restricted to authorised personnel with a legitimate need to know.
- Information will be retained only for as long as necessary and in accordance with the relevant retention schedule, legal requirements, and DBS Code of Practice.

12. Review and Oversight

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees or earlier where there are significant changes to law, safeguarding guidance, DBS requirements, organisational structure, or operational practice.

This policy was originally adopted by the Actaccessible Board of Trustees on: 28/07/2025

This policy was last reviewed, amended and approved by the Actaccessible Board of Trustees on: 05/08/2026

To be reviewed annually or as needed.

Signed: James Michael Dean, Chair of Trustees **Date:** 05/08/2026