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**RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

**POLICY**

**(for staff)**

**This policy has been approved by the Trustee**

**Board of Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid**

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| ***Date:*** | 7 October 2019 |
| ***Signed:*** |  |
| ***Position:*** | Chair |
| ***Policy first issued:*** | December 2015 |
| ***Revised:*** |  |
| ***Next review due:*** |  |

**BELFAST AND LISBURN WOMEN’S AID**

**RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Women’s Aid in Northern Ireland is the lead voluntary agency addressing domestic and sexual violence against women and children, recognising it as one form of violence against women. The overall aim of Women’s Aid is to eliminate domestic violence and to challenge the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate it.

This policy outlines Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid’s (BLWA) commitment

to ensuring no applicant for a job or member of staff is subject to less favourable

treatment on the grounds of committing an offence.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

1. Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant’s suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

3. Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid is committed to equality of opportunity (refer to the organisation’s Equal Opportunities Policy), to following practices and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant of member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability, political opinion or offending background.

4. Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates.

The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.

5. We will request an AccessNI Disclosure where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check.

6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid will ask about convictions which are defined as “not protected”, spent convictions, for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.

7. We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned eg the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

8. Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure. We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure, and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police (without police agreement), with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid will hold the offer of employment for 14 days on receipt of Disclosure.

9. We ensure that all those in Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).

10. We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR SOMEONE FROM WORKING WITH BELFAST AND LISBURN WOMEN’S AID. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF THE OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE OR PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO US BY THE POLICE.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chief Executive of BLWA has responsibility for ensuring the effective

 implementation of this policy and procedures. Staff and volunteers are expected to

abide by the policy and procedures

**BREACH OF THE POLICY**

Breach of this policy and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

**REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the HR Committee (or earlier if a need

is identified).

Staff and volunteers are required to comply with this Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

Please sign and return this page to the HR and Admin Manager.

**Staff/Volunteer Acceptance**

I have read and understood the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy and agree to abide by the requirements laid down:

Signature:

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