



Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

1. Introduction

VOYPIC's vision is that every child in care in Northern Ireland feels safe, valued and loved. Every young person leaving care does so with dignity and respect, and thrives into adulthood.

VOYPIC wants to ensure that all children and young people living in care throughout Northern Ireland are given the best care and protection, they feel safe, their rights are respected, and their views and experiences matter.

VOYPIC wants young people leaving care to have robust support, quality housing, and the resources and opportunities to follow their ambitions and live happy and fulfilling lives.

VOYPIC works to raise awareness of the rights of children and young people, their views and experiences living in and leaving care, and their priorities for change.

VOYPIC will:

- Be accountable for all aspects of our work to the children and young people and funders
- Value, support and empower staff and volunteers to work effectively

2. Policy Statement

VOYPIC is committed to ensuring individuals appointed to posts within the charity are appointed on the basis of merit. When recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers, the key factor is ensuring that the best person for the job/role is appointed.

The selection process therefore ensures that applicants with the appropriate skills, aptitude, ability and potential are considered for selection. As an organisation VOYPIC also needs to recruit safely and carry out its responsibilities appropriately and lawfully.

We undertake to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

While being committed to equality of opportunity for all in recruiting staff to both paid employment and volunteering roles VOYPIC must also ensure that it carries out an objective risk assessment in considering the relevance of a conviction to the post/role on offer.

This policy and related guidelines demonstrate that VOYPIC is committed to fully complying with best practice and the Code of Practice outlined by Access NI. The documents also provide a guide to good

practice in handling disclosure information and factors to consider when assessing the risk and relevance of the conviction to the duties of the job/role.

Policy

1. VOYPIC does not ask applicants to declare a conviction at the point of applying for a position but it is explained in the recruitment material that upon selection, the applicant will have to complete the details for an Access NI disclosure. Following interview, the successful candidate will be contacted and the AccessNI process will be instigated.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. We are committed to equality of opportunity, to following good practice, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. Having a criminal record will not necessarily exclude any person from working with VOYPIC. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of offences or other information contained on a disclosure certificate or provided directly to us by the police.
5. VOYPIC 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, including those with criminal records. 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.
6. We will request an Access NI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough 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 Access NI 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 VOYPIC will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Access NI Disclosure check.
7. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, VOYPIC will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" within the terms of that Order, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.

8. 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 e.g. 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