Safer Recruitment

Policy & Guidelines

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Statement

Concrete Rose Collective CIC (Concrete Rose) recognises the importance of adopting safe recruitment practices and procedures in order to identify, deter and reject people unsuitable for working with children. This Safer Recruitment Policy refers to policies and procedures in place when recruiting members of staff and volunteers (including mentors) alongside hosts who provide supported lodgings (SL) for young people.

Concrete Rose is also an equal opportunity employer and aims to ensure that no job applicant is discriminated against on the grounds of any protected characteristics. It is therefore recognised by Concrete Rose that all people concerned with the recruitment process must have a clear understanding of the recommended safer recruitment procedures, the values and ethos of Concrete Rose and the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

1.2 Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of Concrete Rose will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- Frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- Satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period; and
- Provides the opportunity for contact with children (defined as those under 18 years of age).

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

Concrete Rose is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". Concrete Rose is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, students, volunteers, hosts and supporters who will be engaging in regulated activity. Concrete Rose 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.

Employees and volunteers are all encouraged to become a part of the sign-up service to facilitate the ongoing review of DBS certificates. It is Concrete Rose's policy to re-check DBS Certificates of employees and volunteers every three years and in addition any employee who takes leave for more than three months (i.e. maternity leave, long term sick or career break etc.) must be re-checked before they return to work.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Board of directors

It is the responsibility of the directors of Concrete Rose to:

- Ensure that the organisation operates safe recruitment practices and that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and hosts
- Promote the welfare of children at every stage of the process

3.0 STAFF RECRUITMENT PROCESES

3.1 Introduction

Concrete Rose endeavours to ensure that candidates recruited to available roles are of the required calibre (including abilities, qualifications and experience) to successfully fulfil the job description and person specification including establishing that the candidate is suitable to work with children and particularly vulnerable children (and adults). In order to do this Concrete Rose's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children must be central at every stage in the process. This includes:

- Ensuring that the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people/vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults
- Obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants and investigating, and satisfactorily resolving, any discrepancies or anomalies
- Obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help asses an applicants suitability to work with children/young people/ vulnerable adults and following up any concerns
- At least one face-to-face interview that explores the candidates suitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults as well as their suitability for the pose
- Verifying a successful applicants identity
- Verifying that the applicant has the 'Right to Work' in the UK
- Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed
- Checking their previous employment history and experience
- Verifying that they have the physical capacity for the job
- Carry out an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check for roles in "regulated activity"
- Where roles do not have a specific remit to work with children, but are likely to be in contact with children during the course of their work, the safer recruitment practices still apply.

3.2 **Advertising**

Any advertisement will make clear Concrete Rose's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Adverts will also be clear that successful applicants will need to undertake and Enhanced DBS check (where appropriate) as well as links to the job description and person specification.

3.3 **Application form**

Applicants will be required to complete Concrete Rose's application form when applying for positions (CV applications are not accepted). Applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application form being rejected or summary dismissal, (if the applicant has been selected), along with a possible referral to the police. The application form includes:

- Personal details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth[1], current address and National Insurance number
- Details of any academic and/or vocational qualifications that the applicant has obtained and are relevant to the position for which they are applying (including the awarding body and date of the award)
- A full education and work history since leaving secondary education with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment and reasons for leaving employment

[1] For equality monitoring and not provided to those in the selection process

- A declaration of any family or close relationships to existing employees or decision makers (including advisors)
- Details of two referees with one referee being the applicants current or most recent employer and one a character referee. (Where there is an applicant who is not currently working with children/young people but has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer of this corresponding organisation.) The form makes it clear that references are not accepted from relatives or those writing solely in the capacity of friends.
- A free form statement of the personal qualities and experience of the applicant and how they meet the qualification specification and remit of the job description.
- A personal declaration of the applicant regarding any previous convictions and a statement making it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- A statement outlining the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced DBS.

3.4 **Job Description**

When a job description in written or reviewed (before readvertisement) it should take into account safer recruitment procedures. The job description should clearly state:

- The main duties and responsibilities of the post.
- The values, ethos and faith-based motivation of Concrete Rose.
- The responsibility of the post-holder of promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children/young people/vulnerable adults.

3.5 **Person Specification**

The person specification will:

- Outline the essential and desired qualifications and experience and any other requirement to fulfil the role.
- Outline the competencies and qualities that the candidate must demonstrate to be considered for the role.
- Include the "ability to contribute to the safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children and young people" as an essential attribute.
- Outline core skills and knowledge required for the role.
- Outline the importance of forming and maintain appropriate relationships with children and young people including observing professional boundaries.

3.6 **References**

References will be taken up after the interview process and any offer of employment will be subject to the content of these references. References will ask for information on:

- The length of time the individual has known the applicant and in what capacity.
- The relevant post held (in the case of a professional reference), with dates, salary and reasons for leaving.
- The ability and suitability to work with children and young people.
- Skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these have been demonstrated.
- Any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanction.
- Any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children and young people and the outcomes of these.
- Details of any known criminal conviction or cautions.
- Sickness record.
- If the referee would re-employ the applicant and if not details as to why not.

- Verification of the identity of the referee.

3.7 **Candidate information pack**

The application pack for all vacancies will include:

- The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form.
- The job description and person specification.
- Any relevant information about Concrete Rose and the recruitment process including links to relevant policies such as Equal Opportunities, Data Protection, Ethos and Values Statement, Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy.
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

3.8 **Scrutinising and shortlisting**

At least two people will be involved in the process of short-listing applications and equal opportunities monitoring data will be ignored for the shortlisting process. Only fully completed applications will be accepted for shortlisting and will not normally be returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny will be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short-list the applicant. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, will be explored and verified if a candidate is short listed. All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification using a standardised scoring matrix. This will be done, where possible, anonymously. In addition, as part of the shortlisting process we will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which can then be explored with the applicant at interview. We will inform shortlisted candidates tat online searches may be done as a part of due diligence checks.

3.9 **Interviews**

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults. The selection process for vacancies at Concrete Rose will always include a face-to face interview even if there is only one candidate. There will be a minimum of two interviewers, and in some cases, e.g. for senior or specialist posts, a larger panel will be involved in the interview process. The panel will agree a set of questions that they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post, and any specific matters or discrepancies arising from the candidate's application. A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how that is followed up. Every interview will include a question that refers to the candidates knowledge of safeguarding procedures.

The members of the panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment.
- Be appropriately trained and/or competent; highlight any specific questions that may be relevant from the individual application forms, such as gaps in employment or other anomalies.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children and young people.

- The ability of the individual to support Concrete Rose's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people.
- Gaps in the candidate's employment history and;
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee. The panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS Check.

Concrete Rose will try where possible to involve young people, or at least care experienced adults, in the recruitment process.

3.10 **CAST assessment**

It is expected that those applying for front-line roles will complete A Character and Skills Test (CAST) designed to assess character for challenging roles (https://www.patricktomlinson.com/assessing-character-for-exceptionally-challenging-roles-and-work-patrick-tomlinson-2024-revised-2025/95)

3.11 **Feedback to candidates**

Unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to get feedback on their interview performance and suggested areas for improvement.

3.12 **Pre-appointment checks**

An offer to appoint the successful candidate should be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if those have not already been received);
- Verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified straight after the interview);
- A satisfactory DBS check[2];
  Verification of the candidate's medical fitness; a medical questionnaire should be completed during the application process and presented if asked to attend an interview;
- Verification of qualifications (if not verified after the interview).

3.13 **Criminal convictions and cautions**

The presence of criminal convictions and/or cautions on a DBS check does not automatically disqualify a candidate from being able to work for Concrete Rose and with young people/children and vulnerable adults. (Other than where the DBS check shows that the individual has been disqualified from working with children/young people.) Instead consideration needs to be given to:

- The nature of the offence(s).
- The length of time since the last offence was committed (taking into account any time spent in prison as a consequence of the offence).
- The transparency of the candidate in declaring the offence(s).
- The explanation offered for any offences listed.

Ultimately the board of directors must take the decision as to whether an individual poses any threat to children/young people/adults with safeguarding the premier consideration in recruitment. Candidates will not be considered if:

- The nature of the offence was particularly in relation to children/young people .

[2] It is Concrete Rose's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every three years and in addition any employee who takes leave for more than three months (i.e. maternity leave, long term sick or career break etc.) must be re-checked before they return to work.

- There are serious concerns about the applicants suitability to work with children or young people.
- The applicant provided false information.
- There has not been a sufficient time lag since the last offence and the time of application (not including motoring offences). (The suggested time lag is 5 years.)

In all these cases Concrete Rose directors should consider the need to report relevant information to the police and/or the relevant County Council's Safeguarding Team.

Where an individual with a criminal record (not including cautions) is offered a position at Concrete Rose a risk assessment must be undertaken in reference to the individual and their interaction with children/young people/vulnerable adults.

3.14 **Induction process**

The induction process will vary considerably from role to role. Mandatory training for all roles includes:

- Policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child welfare including how to raise concerns
- Values and ethos of Concrete Rose
- Manual Handling

Mandatory training for staff with face-to-face contact with children/young people includes:

- Emergency first-aid
- Safeguarding training
- Prevent training
- Trauma-informed training (internal or external)

3.15 **Probationary employment period**

All staff are subject to a 6-month probationary period including probation reviews. During this time they should be supported to become effective members of the team and their performance should also be monitored by their manager. Any cause for concern or identification of additional training requirements may lead to an extension of the probationary period by a further 2 months. During probation the employer and employee are subject to one week's written notice of termination of employment.

3.16 **Monitoring**

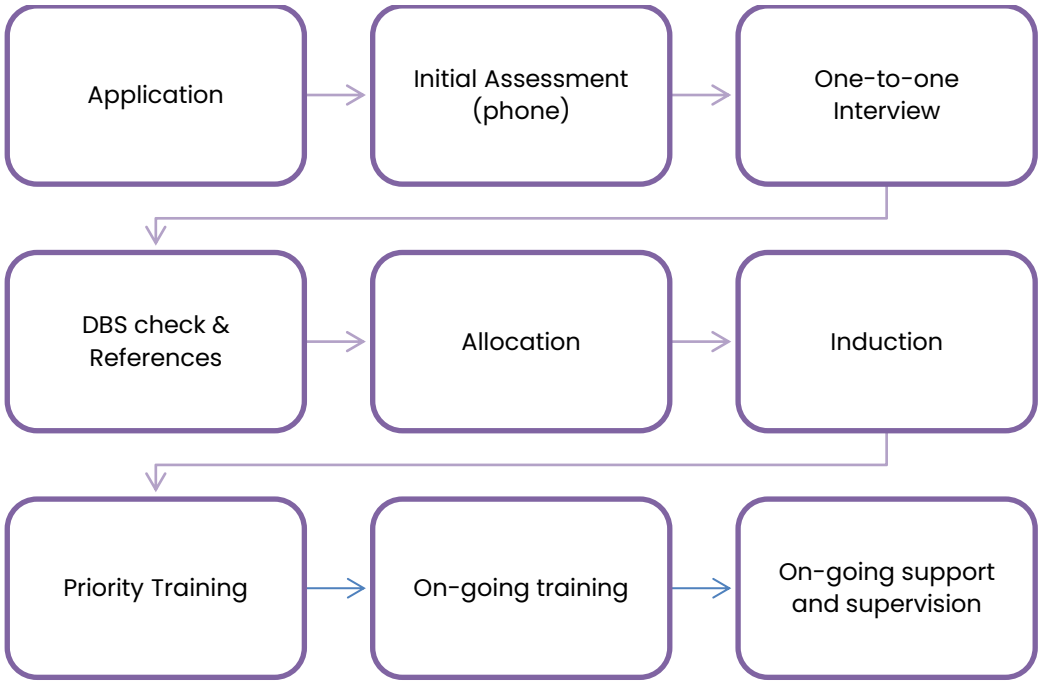
Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. It will include analysis of:

- Staff turnover and reasons for leaving (including exit interviews);
- Statistics from Equal Opportunities forms looking at the diversity of applicants and reflecting on how to ensure equality in the recruitment process.

4.0 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

4.1 **Process overview**

An overview of the volunteer process is show in the diagram below:



4.2 **Application**

Volunteer application forms are available on request when volunteering positions are available at Concrete Rose. The volunteer application form asks applicants to disclose:

- Personal details; name, date of birth, address and contact details
- Area of interest/volunteer post applied for
- Relevant previous experience and qualifications
- Reason for volunteering
- Health conditions
- Two references (ideally at least one professional and one character reference). (As with the applications for staff roles references from family members or from those who solely know the applicant in the capacity as a friend are not accepted)
- Convictions or cautions

The application form also states that applicants will be subject to an enhanced DBS and that these roles are exempt from the provisions in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

4.3 **Initial assessment**

The initial contact with applicants is made via a phone call. This is an initial vetting procedure which seeks to establish whether the candidate has the required skills and experience for the role (if this is not clear from the application form), their motivation to volunteer and whether their availability synchronises with the requirements of the role in question. This is also an opportunity to explain more about Concrete Rose and check there is congruency in ethos and values between the applicant and the organisation.

4.4 **One-to-one interview**

The interview is an opportunity to check the applicants understanding of the work of the organisation, the nature of the role and that their skills, character and experience can be of added value to the organisation and the young people supported by Concrete Rose. It also gives an

opportunity to address any concerns or questions from the application form and for the prospective volunteer to raise any questions.

4.5 **DBS Checks and References**

Following on from the face-to-face interview applicants will be asked to submit information for the DBS. In the case of regulated activity this will be an enhanced disclosure and, for the most part, will make use of the DBS online portal system. (Candidates that are on the sign-up service can simply provide their DBS number.) For those volunteers who will not work with those under 18 (i.e. volunteer mentors for university students) this will incorporate a basic check via www.gov.uk. At the same time references will be taken up from those listed on the application form. This will follow the same protocol outline in section 3.6 (above).

4.6 **Allocation**

Upon successful completion of the references and DBS check volunteers will then be matched with the appropriate volunteer role. At this point they will be introduced to the lead worker or supervisor who will oversee their role and provide supervision support.

4.7 **Induction**

The volunteer will be thoroughly inducted to the role through the relevant training pathway. All volunteers are provided with a job description and are guided through the 'volunteer handbook' which contains:

- Code of conduct
- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Supervision arrangements
- Training support
- Key contacts

Additional training for those with face-to-face contact with children and/or young people (e.g. volunteer mentors) includes:

- Introduction to trauma-informed care
- Mentoring skills part 1: Applying a positive youth development approach
- Mentoring skills part 2: Active listening and goal setting
- Mentoring skills part 3: Boundary management

4.8 **Priority Training**

Within the first three months of volunteering all volunteers must complete:

- Basic safeguarding training
- Prevent training

This will be recorded on the electronic volunteer file.

4.9 **On-going Training**

Volunteers will be able to take part in additional internal training or external training with partner organisations. The training offer includes:

- Suicide prevention training
- Trauma-informed care
- Level 2 Award in Youth Work Principles
- First aid training

- De-escalation training

4.10 **On-going support and supervision**

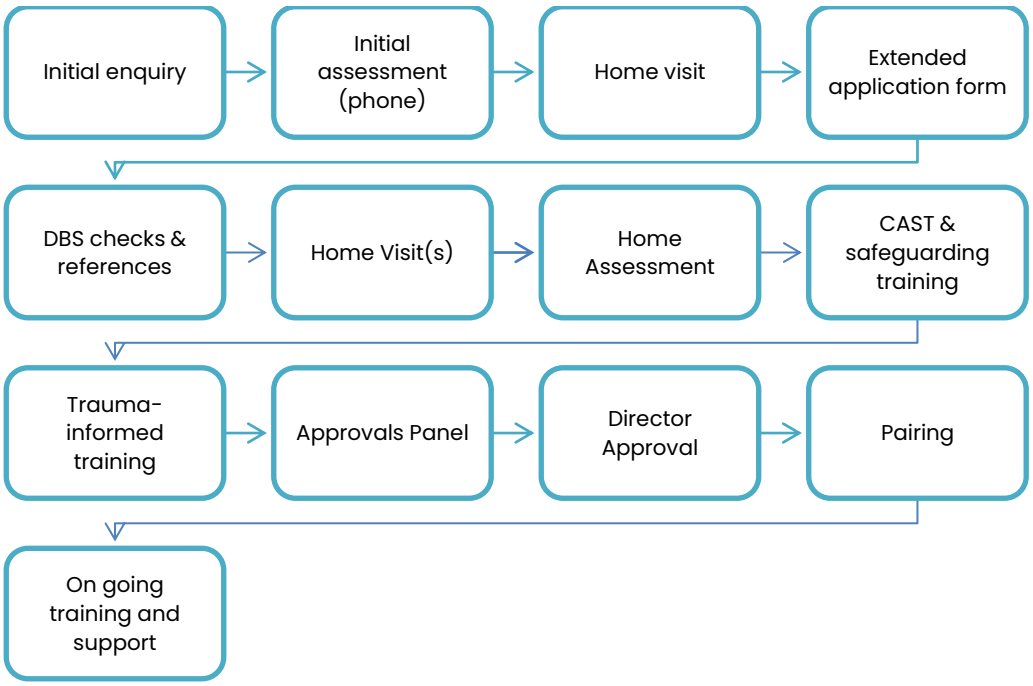
All volunteers will also be subject to ongoing support and supervision including:

- *Welcome pack*: This includes a summary of the main policies and procedures of Concrete Rose and includes relevant emergency contact numbers.
- *24/7 on-call support*: All volunteers can access 24/7 on-call support from the Concrete Rose core team.
- *Supervision*: Regular supervision from the relevant line manager (in the mentor scheme this is generally a rhythm of once per term).
- *Peer support*: Regular opportunities are provided for volunteers from relevant programme areas to get together, form relationships and provide opportunities for mutual support mechanisms.

5.0 HOST RECRUITMENT PROCESS

5.1 **Process overview**

An overview of the process involved in recruiting hosts is show in the diagram below:



5.2 **Initial enquiry form**

The initial enquiries into providing supported lodgings (SL) can be via website or phone and allows for some initial dialogue (verbally or electronically) with the interested couple or individual.

5.3 **Initial assessment**

The initial contact with applicants is made via a phone call. This is an initial vetting procedure which seeks to establish whether the candidate has a clear understanding of the role, the home circumstances of the candidate and whether they have the required time, skills, motivation and experience for the role. A standard initial assessment pro-forma is used to capture the information that in received in this conversation.

5.4 **Home visit (virtual or in-person)**

This is an opportunity to meet with the couple and individual who are interested in Supported Lodgings explore it further, answer any questions and importantly see the accommodation including the proposed room that the young person would occupy.

5.5 **Application form, DBS checks and references**

5.5.1 Application form

The application form for prospective hosts is a detailed and extensive form including:

- Personal details (including date of birth NI number, belief/religion, sexual orientation, ethnic origin etc)
- Thorough employment history for the past 10 years (including current occupation)
- Details of any disciplinary proceedings or sanctions
- Declaration of criminal convictions and cautions
- Thorough address history (for the last 10 years)
- Education history and relevant skills and experience
- Health and medical history
- Other members of the household
- Written account of the motivations for SL
- Hobbies or social activities
- References
- Whether the couple/individual are also interested in providing emergency accommodation to young people in crises

5.5.2 DBS checks and references

Prospective hosts are asked to submit and Enhanced DBS[3] check via the online portal. References will also be undertaken including:

- A character reference for each applicant
- A professional reference from the current employer[4]
- A GP reference

Apart from the GP reference which is an additional stipulation the content of these references follows the same format as for employed staff (see point 3.6 above).

5.6 **Home visit(s)**

The second home visit is undertaken in person. In this home visit it is necessary to speak to all members of the household who are above the age of 18 and to view in-person the suitability of the premises and the spare room in particular that will be used for SL. Sometimes the content of this stage may, in actual fact, be split across two separate visits. These visits encompass:

- A more detailed introduction to Concrete Rose and SL including the difference between support and care
- An opportunity to explore the application form further including, and in particular, any discrepancies or areas of concern.
- A thorough conversation on the motivations for SL

[3] Hosts will be encouraged to participate in the sign-up service and DBS checks will be repeated every 3 years.
[4] Where the candidate has been with the current employer for less than a year a further professional reference will be sought

- An opportunity to understand family relationships and circumstances including any previous partners (particularly marital)
- A more thorough examination of career, income, and skills and experiences.
- An insight into pets kept at the family home and any regular adult visitors
- An understanding of the local area, the location of the property, local schools and colleges and transport networks.
- A health and safety overview of the house including household insurance, smoke detectors etc.
- A description of family lifestyle and routines
- An opportunity for the individual or couple to ask questions on the process and expectations of SL.

This information is recorded on the 'home visit' pro-forma.

5.7 **Home Assessment**

An assessment of the physical and social environment particularly to spot any safety issues and any potential triggers or sensory overloads for traumatised young people. To aid this assessment, where possible, the home visit will be conducted by or with a care experienced individual who is sensitive to the requirements of a trauma-informed space. This information, and any necessary actions before a home is 'signed-off', is recorded on the 'Home assessment' proforma.

5.8 **Character and Skills Assessment & Safeguarding training**

Character and skills assessment: We conduct a Character and Skills Test (CAST) on each host designed to assess character for challenging roles (https://www.patricktomlinson.com/assessing-character-for-exceptionally-challenging-roles-and-work-patrick-tomlinson-2024-revised-2025/95).

Introduction to safeguarding in supported lodgings: This training is available through the Supported Lodgings National Network (SLNN) and covers the basics of safeguarding and child protection including identifying the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns.

5.9 **Induction and Training**

Following the successful uptake of references and completion of the Enhanced DBS applicants will take part in a training and induction process that is equivalent to approximately 12 hours of time. This process includes:

- An overview of the ethos and values of Concrete Rose and how to embed this in practice
- Safeguarding training with particular reference to Concrete Rose's Safeguarding Policy
- Trauma informed training. Topics include:
    - Attachment, trauma and brain development, and behaviour as the communication of a need
    - Creating a trauma-informed environment - Understanding trauma and promoting recovery from toxic stress
    - Self-care – Understanding secondary trauma and promoting resilience
- Basic first aid training (online)
- An introduction to the wider supporter network including other SL families in the location and the youth worker/mentor who will be supporting the young person.
- An introduction the on-call support contact and the relevant SL supervisor
- Code of conduct

Individuals and couples are also provided with a host handbook and are asked to complete prevent training and other relevant online courses in the subsequent three months. Records of training are kept electronically.

5.10 **Approvals panel**

All hosts must be recommended as fit for approval by an independent panel. This includes the chair of the Advisory Board (who is also a Local Authority Trained Designated Person for Safeguarding), a qualified social worker and an experienced host/foster carer.

5.11 **Directors Approval**

Ultimately hosts are approved by 2 of the directors at Concrete Rose who play a role similar to the Agency Decision Maker at a fostering agency. The directors ensure that all necessary steps in the application process have been completed, take into account the recommendations of the panel, (including ensuring that all recommendations by panel have been completed) before signing off the hosts as 'approved'.

5.12 **Pairing**

Once couples/individuals have been fully inducted into the course they are 'approved hosts' and thus available to be paired with a young person. The pairing process in and of itself encompasses several steps to ensure the best match between a couple/individual and the young person. This includes:

- A referral form from, and thorough discussions with, the relevant agency/social worker. This encompasses a thorough overview of the needs, risks, and vulnerabilities of the young person provided by the relevant referring agency.
- A meeting with the SL supervisor and the relevant young people to gauge their thoughts, desires and needs around SL.
- A matching process which takes into account:
    - The beliefs, backgrounds, ethnicity and heritage of the SL couple/individual and the young person
    - The experience of the hosts and the behaviour and additional vulnerabilities of the young person
    - The house/family dynamics including any implications on other children or adults in the house
    - The location of the SL and a suitable location for the young person based on risks, access to education and support networks etc
- Once a suitable match has been made the young person will be taken to meet the SL couple or individual and visit the property. They can then feedback on this visit to the relevant youth worker and SL supervisor.
- If both parties are in agreement the young person moves into the SL.

5.13 **On-going Training, Support and Supervision**

All individuals and couples providing SL will be able to access regular on-going training, support and supervision. A summary of these mechanisms is listed below:

- *Host welcome pack*: This includes a summary of the main policies and procedures of Concrete Rose and includes relevant emergency contact numbers.
- *24/7 on-call support*: All host can access 24/7 on-call support from the Concrete Rose core team.

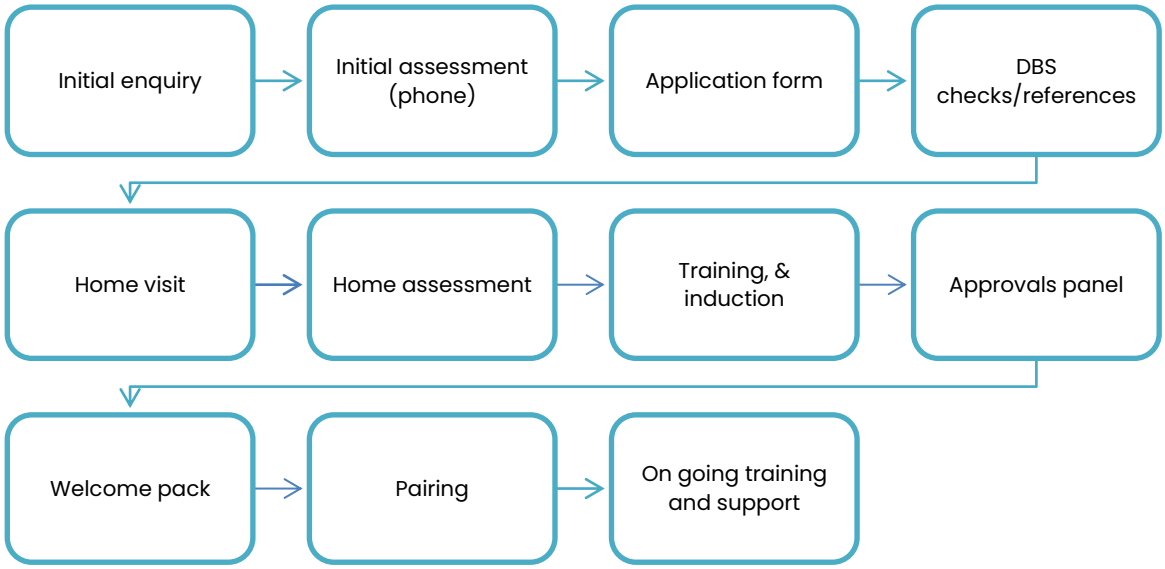
- *Membership to Foster Talk*: All hosts are automatically enrolled into Foster Talk which offers tax and personal finance advice, 24/7 counselling helpline, 24/7 medical helpline, 24/7 legal advice and legal expenses insurance in the case of an allegation that may arise as a result of being a supported lodgings host. For more information on this scheme see: https://www.fostertalk.org/membership-for-carers/
- *Weekly check-ins*: Hosts receive weekly telephone check-in calls from their Concrete Rose core team contact. If hosts require additional support at any point these phone calls may prompt and in-person meeting.
- *Bi-monthly clinical supervision*: Clinical supervision is available to all hosts on a bi-monthly basis (i.e. every 8 weeks). This may take place solely with one set of hosts but in some circumstances is combination of two sets of hosts. Clinical supervision is not counselling but is an opportunity for hosts to work through the challenges they are experiencing through hosting in a supportive and non-judgemental environment.
- *Area-based support networks*: These are informal gatherings that bring together hosts from distinct locations as a means to engender mutual support and encouragement. Such support networks are facilitated by Concrete Rose on a 3-monthly basis.
- *Monthly supervision*: Hosts receive a more formal supervision on a monthly basis. This includes a review of any current or recent placements, and opportunity for hosts to raise any concerns of challenges and a review of the personal development plan (PDP). Hosts are also made aware for any upcoming training opportunities.
- *3-monthly placement reviews*: A formal review of placements takes place on a 3-monthly basis. As a part of this review hosts and young people are asked to complete the bespoke (self) assessment questionnaire that analyses the progress a young person has made against the four areas of wellness. The 3-monthly review is also an opportunity for young people to feedback to their hosts (and vice versa) and is an opportunity for the Concrete Rose core team to mediate challenges and help ensure the relationship between host(s) and young person continues to prosper.
- *Annual appraisal*: Hosts receive an annual appraisal that reflects on the support they have been able to offer young people over the previous year and reviews (and where necessary re-writes) their PDP. The appraisal also takes into account feedback from young people including through the 3-monthly placement review and, where relevant, exit questionnaires. Hosts are not, as a matter of course, taken back to panel, unless their have been concerns raised by young people, the core team, or others.
- *Further training*: Hosts are regularly able to access additional training modules without cost through Concrete Rose and/or the SLNN training suite. These are not mandatory although hosts are encouraged to attend at least one training event/course per year and this is reflected in the PDP. Options available include:
    - Supporting separated migrant children
    - Adolescence brain development
    - Supporting young people who self-harm
    - Harms outside the home

6.0 STUDENT HOST RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Through our work with Cambridge University we also operate a supported lodgings 'lite' model for university students who need accommodation out of term time or post-graduation. Whilst these students must fulfil the criteria of being care experienced and/or estranged from family these are generally short-term arrangements (3 months or less) with adults (all over 18) often with significantly reduced risk factors and more independence. Some hosts may choose only to accommodate this cohort and are thus subject to amended recruitment processes as outlined below

6.1 **Process overview**

An overview of the process involved in recruiting hosts for temporary student placements is show in the diagram below:



6.2 **Initial enquiry**

The initial enquiries into providing SL for students can be via website, Whatsapp or phone and allows for some initial dialogue (verbally or electronically) with the interested couple or individual.

6.3 **Initial assessment**

The initial contact with applicants is made via a phone call. This is an initial vetting procedure which seeks to establish whether the candidate has a clear understanding of the role, the home circumstances of the candidate and whether they have the required time, skills, motivation and experience for the role.

6.4 **Application form, DBS checks and references**

6.4.1 Application form

The application form for prospective hosts is a detailed and extensive form including:

- Personal details (including date of birth NI number, belief/religion, sexual orientation, ethnic origin etc)
- Thorough employment history for the past 10 years (including current occupation)
- Details of any disciplinary proceedings or sanctions
- Declaration of criminal convictions and cautions
- Thorough address history (for the last 10 years)
- Education history and relevant skills and experience
- Health and medical history
- Other members of the household
- Written account of the motivations for SL
- Hobbies or social activities
- References

6.4.2 DBS checks and references

Prospective hosts are asked to complete a standard DBS check via the government website. Character and professional references are also undertaken.

6.5 **Home visit and assessment**

This is an in-person home visit. This is an opportunity to speak to all members of the household who are above the age of 18 and to view in-person the suitability of the premises and the spare room in particular that will be used for SL. It includes:

- A more detailed introduction to Concrete Rose and SL
- An opportunity to explore the application form further including, and in particular, any discrepancies or areas of concern.
- A thorough conversation on the motivations for SL
- A more thorough examination of career, income, and skills and experiences.
- An insight into pets kept at the family home and any regular adult visitors
- An understanding of the local area, the location of the property, local schools and colleges and transport networks.
- A description of family lifestyle and routines
- An opportunity for the individual or couple to ask questions on the process and expectations of SL.

This information is recorded on the 'home visit' pro-forma.

6.6 **Home Assessment**

An assessment of the physical and social environment particularly to spot any safety issues and any potential triggers or sensory overloads for traumatised young people.

6.7 **Induction and Training**

Following the successful uptake of references and completion of the DBS applicants will take part in a training and induction process. Mandatory training includes:

- An overview of the ethos and values of Concrete Rose and how to embed this in practice
- Induction to the Concrete Rose policies on equality and diversity, suicide prevention and missing young people.
- An introduction to the wider supporter network including other SL families in the location and the youth worker who will be supporting the young person.
- An introduction the on-call support contact and the relevant SL supervisor
- Code of conduct

Optional training includes:

- Trauma informed training including:
    - Attachment, trauma and brain development, and behaviour as the communication of a need
    - Creating a trauma-informed environment - Understanding trauma and promoting recovery from toxic stress
    - Self-care – Understanding secondary trauma and promoting resilience

Individuals and couples are also provided with a host welcome handbook.

6.8 **Approvals panel**

All hosts must be recommended as fit for approval by an independent panel. This includes the chair of the Advisory Board (who is also a Local Authority Trained Designated Person for Safeguarding), a qualified social worker and an experienced host/foster carer.

6.9 **Pairing**

Once couples/individuals have been fully inducted into the course they are 'approved hosts' and thus available to be paired with a student. The pairing process in and of itself encompasses several steps to ensure the best match between a couple/individual and the young person. This includes:

- A self-referral form
- References from the student including a personal and professional reference.
- A meeting with the relevant Concrete Rose representative and the relevant young people to gauge their thoughts, desires and needs around SL.
- A matching process which takes into account:
    - The beliefs, backgrounds, ethnicity and heritage of the SL couple/individual and the young person
    - The experience of the hosts and the behaviour and additional vulnerabilities of the young person
    - The house/family dynamics including any implications on other children or adults in the house
    - The location of the SL and a suitable location for the young person based on risks, access to education and support networks etc
- Once a suitable match has been made the young person will be taken to meet the SL couple or individual and visit the property. They can then feedback on this visit to the relevant youth worker and SL supervisor.
- If both parties are in agreement the young person moves into the SL.

6.10 **On-going Training, Support and Supervision**

All individuals and couples providing SL will be able to access regular on-going training, support and supervision. A summary of these mechanisms is listed below:

- *Host welcome pack*: This includes a summary of the main policies and procedures of Concrete Rose and includes relevant emergency contact numbers.
- *24/7 on-call support*: All host can access 24/7 on-call support from the Concrete Rose core team.
- *Area-based support networks*: These are informal gatherings that bring together hosts from distinct locations as a means to engender mutual support and encouragement. Such support networks are facilitated by Concrete Rose on a 3-monthly basis.
- *Monthly check-in*: This includes a review of any current or recent placements, and opportunity for hosts to raise any concerns of challenges and a review of the personal development plan (PDP). Hosts are also made aware for any upcoming training opportunities.
- *Further training*: Hosts are regularly able to access additional training modules without cost through Concrete Rose and/or the SLNN training suite. These are not mandatory although hosts are encouraged to attend at least one training event/course per year and this is reflected in the PDP. Options available include:
    - Supporting separated migrant children
    - Adolescence brain development
    - Supporting young people who self-harm
    - Harms outside the home