**Affinity 2020 CIC DBS Certificate Handling Policy**

**General Principles**

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust and to engage individuals in regulated activity, **Affinity 2020 CIC** complies fully with the DBS code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

Affinity 2020 CIC also adheres to the statutory guidance outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2021 – Part 3 (Safer Recruitment), and The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 for specialist Post-16 provision. We comply fully with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling and storage of DBS certificate information.

This policy is available upon request, and the designated Data Protection Officer ensures full compliance with all relevant regulations.

**Storage and Access**

DBS certificate information is stored securely in lockable, non-portable storage containers. Access is strictly controlled and limited only to individuals who are entitled to see such information as part of their professional responsibilities.

**Handling**

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, DBS certificate information is only disclosed to individuals who are specifically authorised to receive it during the course of their duties. Affinity 2020 CIC maintains a detailed record of all persons to whom DBS certificates or related information have been disclosed.

Passing this information to anyone not authorised is a criminal offence.

Please note: Organisations inspected by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), or the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) may be legally entitled to retain the certificate for inspection purposes. Similarly, retention of certificates may be required for safeguarding audits and demonstrating compliance with safer recruitment practices. Such retention must be fully compliant with the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act, and GDPR, and embedded within the organisation’s policies on DBS information management.

**Usage**

Before initiating an online DBS check, applicants must provide consent for sharing their DBS data with Affinity 2020 CIC. If consent is not provided, a paper application must be completed instead.

Certificate information will only be used for the purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant has given explicit consent.

**Retention**

Once a recruitment or relevant decision has been made, DBS certificate information will not be kept longer than necessary. Retention is only for resolving disputes, complaints, or for safeguarding audits. During this time, all standard security measures for access and storage will be observed.

If a paper certificate is retained, it will not be held for more than six months.

**Disposal**

After the retention period has ended, DBS certificate information will be securely destroyed via shredding, pulping, or burning. Until destruction, such information will not be placed in insecure receptacles such as waste bins or confidential waste sacks.

No photocopy, image, or any other copy or representation of the DBS certificate or its contents will be retained. However, the following details may be recorded:

* Date of issue of the certificate
* Name of the certificate holder
* Type of certificate requested
* Position for which it was requested
* Certificate reference number
* Outcome of the recruitment decision