**Policy Statement for the Recruitment of**

 **Ex-Offenders**

**1. Introduction**

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, we aim to comply fully with the Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against anyone who is the subject of a Disclosure based on conviction or other information revealed. It is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed.

**2. Principles**

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

 We are committed to equality of opportunity, to following practices, 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 dependants, physical or mental disability, or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

 Norse Group 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 skills, qualifications and experience.

We will request a Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where a 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 the Norse Group will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Disclosure check.

 Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, the Norse Group will encourage all applicants selected for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Applicants will normally be requested to complete a criminal records self-declaration form. We ask that this information be sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

 In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Norse Group will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" in terms of that Act, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.

 At interview, or under separate discussion, we undertake to ensure an open and measured discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

 We ensure that all those in the organisation 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 Act 1974.

 We undertake to make every subject of a 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 bar you from working with us. This will depend on the offence and the relevance of the offence in relation to the position applied for. The factors taken into account will include the responsibilities of the position, the vulnerability of the customer group, the nature of the offence(s), the number and pattern of the offences (if there is more than one), how long ago the offence(s) occurred and the age of the offender when the offence(s) occurred