

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR ALL ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

1) INTRODUCTION

All organisations which employ staff or volunteers to work with children have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes ensuring that the organisation adopts safe recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable persons from gaining access to children.

The Local Safeguarding Board has a key function to establish “effective policies and procedures, based on national guidance, for checking the suitability of people applying for work with children (Working Together to Safeguard Children, Chapter 3 3.25)

These model procedures produced by the LSCB provide organisations with minimum good practice considerations but do not cover all issues relating to safe recruitment and selection. It is the responsibility of each agency or organisation to consult with their personnel or HR advisor, review or develop their own procedures and to ensure their practice satisfies the requirements of employment law.

2) SCOPE

These procedures apply to all adults who have contact with children through their work whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. They also apply to those persons who may not have direct contact with children, but because of their presence will still be seen as safe and trustworthy or have access to sensitive information. The principles of safe recruitment should, therefore, be included in the terms of any contract or service level agreement drawn up between the organisation and contractors or agencies that provide services for, or adults to work with, children for whom the organisation is responsible. Any service level agreement or contract should therefore contain a safeguarding statement which makes explicit the standards expected. The agency or organisation should monitor compliance with the contract which should also include a requirement that the provider will not sub-contract to any personnel who have not been part of a safe recruitment process.

3) RIGOROUS SCRUITINY

This is the key to safe recruitment. All information gathered during the recruitment process must be rigorously checked at all stages of the process. It is important that the need to safeguard children is also considered at every stage of the recruitment process. Particular care should be given to checking dates of birth, names and identifying any gaps in employment details.

Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the candidate for completion.

4) TRAINING

All organisations involved in the selection of adults to work with children should ensure that designated staff undertakes safe recruitment training as offered by the LSCB’s training programme, the employer and other training specific to their organisation where

available e.g. National College of School Leadership training for local authority designated staff, head teachers and governors. The LSCB will monitor the take up of such training to ensure that all organisations have appropriately trained staff involved in their recruitment processes.

5) THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

It is important that the need to safeguard children is considered at every stage of the recruitment process. All organisations should therefore adopt a statement reflecting their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children which is incorporated in all advertisements, application forms and documents relating to recruitment and selection.

5.1) PREPARING THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Once a post becomes vacant or a new post is created the job description and person specification need to be reviewed or agreed to ensure they comply with these procedures. Both need to reflect the applicant's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Job Description should be an accurate reflection of the job a person is expected to do although it should not be a list of every task undertaken. The job description should clearly set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children with whom the person will have contact.

The Person Specification should explain:

The qualifications and experience needed for the role;

The competences and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate;

How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process

Both the job description and person specification should be completed at the same time and before the job is advertised. Under no circumstances should the person specification be completed or revised after the selection panel has had access to the applications

5.2) ADVERTISEMENTS AND INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The advertisement should stress the organisations commitment to safeguarding children and should therefore include a statement to this effect.

The advertisement needs to be clear and concise and include:

Post title

Salary

Type of contract-Permanent, Fixed Term, Temporary etc

Post location

Hours of work

Brief description of organisation

Brief description of the post

Closing date for application

Interview date

How and to whom to apply

Equal opportunities process

Contact number for further information

Refer to the need for CRB check

5.3) INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

The level of the post will influence the amount of information to be sent to applicants. All information given to the interested applicant should highlight the importance placed by the organisation on the rigorous selection processes and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A copy of the organisations Child Protection Policy should therefore be included in the pack. All candidates should be asked to bring proof of identity (see Short listing)

The information should stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that where a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a CRB Disclosure straight away.

5.4) APPLICATION FORM

All organisations should develop a standard application form which is used for all staff vacancies.

The application form should ask for:

Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past

A full employment history, both paid and voluntary since leaving school in chronological order plus reasons for leaving

Details of any academic and/or vocational qualifications

A declaration that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bindovers.

Details of references

Word of mouth appointments and CVs should not be accepted under any circumstances.

5.5) REFERENCES

The application form should request both professional and character references, one of which should be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer should be asked for in addition to that from the current or most recent employer if this is different. Careful consideration need to be given to applicants who have been working as a locum or with an agency on a series of temporary contracts. The need to ask for additional references ie last permanent employer should be considered

Wherever possible references should be obtained prior to the interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during interview.

References should contain objective verifiable information and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children should be provided.

The referee should be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against him/her or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children and young people or about the applicant's behaviour towards children or young people. Details about the outcome of any concerns or allegations should be sought. The references should be checked carefully with the application form to identify any possible discrepancies.

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

6) THE SELECTION PROCESS

6.1) SELECTION PANEL

It is essential that the same selection panel should both short list and interview candidates. Members of the panel should not stand to gain from the appointment or have a personal relationship with any of the applicants. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safe R&S training.

6.2) SHORTLISTING

There are standard procedures for short listing to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. In drawing up a shortlist of applicants for interview there should be a systematic and consistent approach.

All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation

All candidates should be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, either a full birth certificate, passport or photo card driving licence (some form

of photograph identification) and additionally a document such as a utility bill that verifies the candidates name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Candidates should also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications should be obtained from the awarding body.

6.3) INTERVIEWING SHORT-LISTED CANDIDATES

The selection interview is a matching process: the apparent attributes of the candidate against the declared requirements of the job as listed on the person specification. All questions must be prepared in advance and must not be discriminatory with regards to sex, marital status, race or ethnic origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or political belief.

The candidate's attitude toward children and young people in general should be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in particular. The following areas should be explored with applicants in the interview

Their motivation and reasons for working with children

Their attitudes and behaviour about control and punishment

Their perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children

Their ability to form and maintain professional relationships

Their personal belief systems, including attitudes to, perception of and sensitivity to sexual images of children

Their understanding of safeguarding children

Possible questions:

- *Safeguarding children is an important part of our work. Can you give some examples of how you would contribute to making the organisation a safer environment for children?*
- *Tell me about a time when a child or young person behaved in a way that caused you concern. How did you deal with this and who did you involve?*
- *Why do you want to work with children? What do you think you have to offer? Give an example of how children have benefited from contact with you?*

At least one member of the interview panel should be trained in how best this can be done.

Any gaps and changes in employment history should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee.

6.4) AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Panel members should separately score the candidates. They should then share their scores and discuss their reasons for reaching this score. This discussion should result in a joint agreed score for each candidate.

6.5) OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

An offer of appointment should be conditional upon pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed, including:

A CRB check appropriate to the role

A check of DfES List 99 and/or the DoH Protection of Children Act (POCA) List

Verification of the candidate's medical fitness

Verification of any relevant professional status and whether any restrictions have been imposed by a regulatory body such as the General Teaching Council (GTC) and the General Medical Council (GMC).

Evidence of permission to work for those who are not nationals of a European Economic Area country

Receipt of two satisfactory written references

7) CRIMINAL RECORDS

Employers should make a judgement about suitability to work with children, taking into account only those offences which may be relevant to the post in question. In deciding the relevance the following should be considered:

The nature of the appointment

The nature of the offence

The age at which the offence took place

The frequency of the offence

Anyone who is barred from work with children in a regulated position, as set out in Section 36 criminal Justice and Court Act 2000, is committing an offence if they apply for, offers to do so or accept any work in any of the regulated positions as set out in the Act. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to produce work in a regulated position for an individual who is disqualified from working with children, or fail to remove such an individual from such work.

8) CHECKS ON OVERSEAS STAFF

The same checks should be made on overseas staff as for all other staff, including CRB checks

Where an applicant has worked or been resident overseas in the previous 5 years, the employer should where possible obtain a check of the applicant's criminal record from the relevant authority in that country. Not all countries provide this service and advice can be sought from the CRB Overseas Information service.

9) RECORDING

All documentation relating to the recruitment of staff must be retained on file. Any check completed should be confirmed in writing and retained on the candidate's personnel file, together with photocopies of and documents used to verify his/her identity and qualifications. Under CRB regulations, CRB disclosures can usually only be kept for 6 months, but a record should be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained and who by, the level of the disclosure and the unique reference number.

A record should be kept of evidence to show that such checks have been carried out in respect of supply staff and volunteers whether recruited directly or through an agency.

Satisfactory references must be kept on the candidates personnel file or, in the case of supply staff or volunteers not recruited through an agency, on a central record within the organisation.

Where information gained by the employer from either references or other checks calls into question the candidate's suitability to work with children, or where the candidate has provided false information in support of the application the facts should be reported to the Safeguarding Unit and or police who have a responsibility to refer to the Safeguarding Operations Unit (formerly the Teachers Misconduct Team).

It is recommended that staff should not commence work with children until the CRB check has been returned. In specific circumstances senior managers may undertake a full risk assessment to enable staff to work until such checks have been returned.

10) INDUCTION AND SUPERVISION OF NEWLY APPOINTED STAFF

The induction of all newly appointed staff should include an introduction to the organisation's child protection policies and procedures. This should include being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of those staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

New staff members should be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected.

They should also be made aware of the organisation's personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the relevant whistle blowing policy.

The programme of induction should also include attendance at child protection training at a level appropriate to the member of staff's work with children.

Senior managers should ensure that their staff are adequately and appropriately supervised/ supported and that they have ready access to advice, expertise and management support in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection.

11) MONITORING

All Agencies and organisations should monitor both the recruitment process and induction arrangements to ensure compliance with the procedures and any new legislation in order to review and improve future practice.

Any concerns that arise through the process of continued supervision which calls into the question the persons suitability to work with children should be managed according to the procedures for the management of allegations against staff.

Definitions

For the purpose of this procedure “children “refers to any child under the age of 18yrs

Reference to “staff” or “volunteers” refers to any adult who is employed, commissioned or contracted to work with or on behalf of children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.