



SHANKLEA EYFS

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Safer Recruitment in Schools

1. Elements of safe practice for Schools

Safer practice in recruitment means giving consideration to safeguarding arrangements at every step of the process.

1.1. Planning and Advertising

It is important to be clear about the mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be stated in the advertisement for the post, in order to prevent unwanted applications. The recruitment process needs to be planned, including who will be involved, responsibilities and timescales.

The advertisement should include a statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced criminal record check where appropriate.

1.2. Job Description

Once a post becomes vacant or a new post is created the job description and person specification need to be reviewed and agreed to ensure compliance with safe recruitment guidance.

This should clearly state:

- The main duties of the post
- The extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children/ young people/ vulnerable adults s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with.¹

1.3. Person Specification

This should include:

- The essential and desirable qualifications and experience
- Other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people
- The competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate

1.4. Information Pack to Candidates

¹ This includes where the post holder will work mainly or exclusively with adults. Some of these adults will be parents, grandparents or carers and will have contact with children and young people.

All information given to interested applicants should highlight the importance of the rigorous selection processes and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It should be clear that proof of identity will be required, as well as a DBS check where appropriate.

- The pack should include a copy of: The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form
- The job description and person specification
- Relevant information about the organization and the recruitment process
- The agency's Child Protection Policy Statement
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

1.5. Application Form

Employers should use an application form to obtain a common set of core data. It is not good practice to accept curriculum vitae in place of an application form because this will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. The applicant form should refer to the organization's commitment to safeguarding children. It should obtain:

- Identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, current address and National Insurance Number.²
- A statement of any academic and/ or vocational qualifications with details of awarding body and date of award.
- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment.
- Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer/line manager, not a colleague. Normally two referees should be sufficient.
- Where an applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children in addition to the current or most recent employer.
- References should not be accepted from relatives or friends.
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post and how s/he meets the person specification
- Information about any previous convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs, both personal and professional. There should be an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

² To comply with The Employment Equality (Age) Regulation October 2006, the date of birth is not to be included on the main application form, but the age range is recorded on Equalities Monitoring form, which can be retained by Employee Services and not made available to those involved in the short-listing process.

1.6. Scrutinising and Short Listing

The same selection panel should both short list and interview the candidate. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safe recruitment and selection training. This is mandatory from January 2010

- All application forms should be scrutinized to ensure:
 - They are fully and properly completed
 - The information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies,
 - Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified.
- Incomplete applications should not be accepted.
- Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment and the reasons for this should be noted. This is so that they can be discussed further if the candidate is short listed.
- Any history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid career move from a permanent to temporary post should also be discussed and clarified.
- All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification and meet the essential criteria in all sections.
- If there has been a good response to the advert, it is recommended to use the desirable criteria to further produce a short list from the candidates that meet all of the essential criteria.

The purpose of shortlisting is to pull out a good selection of candidates who meet the criteria and are deemed as good candidates that the interview panel wish to meet and discuss the applications with.

1.7. Interviews

- The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification, and explore their suitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults.
- The interview should stress that the identity of the successful candidate will be checked thoroughly and, that where a DBS check is appropriate, prior to appointment there will be a requirement to complete an application for a DBS disclosure.
- All candidates should bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, and a document such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation. Some form of photographic ID should be seen.
- Candidates should bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualification(s). If this is not possible, written confirmation must be obtained from the awarding body. Also documentation of registration with appropriate professional body.
- A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personal file.

1.8. Interview Panel

A panel of at least two people is recommended, allowing one member to observe and assess the candidate and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. One member of the panel should be trained in safe recruitment practice.

The members of the panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about the appointment
- Meet before the interview to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification and to prepare a list of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post.
- Identify any issues they wish to explore with each candidate based on the information provided in their application form and in the references.
- Notes of the applicant's interview answers should be collated by chair of the panel and stored securely.

1.9. Scope of the Interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the post, the panel should explore:

- The candidate's attitude towards children/young people/vulnerable adults;
- His/her ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history;
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee ;
- Whether the candidate wishes to declare anything relating to the requirement for a DBS check.

The interview should also explore issues relating to safeguarding, including:

- Motivation to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries;
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- Attitudes to use of authority;

1.10. Participation of Children and Young People

Children and young people can make a valuable contribution to the recruitment process and their participation should be considered for key strategic and managerial posts as well as posts where staff will have a high level of responsibility for children's day to day care e.g. residential staff.

The following considerations should be taken into account in planning children's involvement:

- Clarification of the role children will take in the process, how their views will be taken into account in selection and what weighting these will be given.
- Preparation and/or training
- Process for debriefing/feedback

1.11. Safeguarding (Warner) Interviews

For posts requiring the post holder to work with highly vulnerable children, e.g. looked after children, children with disabilities, or posts where staff will have sole care of responsibility for a child/group of children, e.g. staff taking children on residential trips, consideration should be given to the need for an additional safeguarding (Warner) interview. Such interviews were a recommendation of The report of the Committee of Inquiry into Selection, Development and Management of Staff in Children's Homes (Warner, 1992). The aim is to address areas that are more difficult to assess in the formal interview setting.

Standard 27 of The National Minimum Standards (DOH, 2002) requires local authorities to exercise care in the selection of all staff and volunteers working with children in children's homes. The Bichard Report recommended the assessment of personal qualities during the selection process.

Areas of assessment include:

- Motivation and why they want to work in this area,
- Integrity and values, ,
- Authority,
- Accountability,
- Ethical standards,
- Emotional resilience,
- Team work.

Elements include:

- Identification of support for candidate if necessary
- Careful recording to evidence findings
- Feedback to candidate

Training is essential for staff prior to undertaking these interviews.

1.12. References

- The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.
- One reference should be from the current or most recent employer/line manager or HR (not from a colleague within the organisation)
- They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.
- A copy of the job description and person specification should be included with all requests
- References or testimonials provided by the candidate, or open references, i.e. To Whom It May Concern should not be accepted. Open references/testimonials may be forged or the result of a 'compromise agreement'.
- References should be sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones. If possible these should be obtained prior to interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. (This may be particularly helpful for posts where a safeguarding interview is planned.)
- Where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before the interview, once received it should be scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before the person's appointment is confirmed

- References should seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion. The use of reference proforma can help achieve this

If an applicant is not currently employed in working with children, but has previously done so, then it is advisable to check with the last relevant employer to confirm details of their employment and reason(s) for leaving.

Requests for references should ask:

- The referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship and how long has the referee known the candidate.
- How s/he has demonstrated that s/he meets the person specification.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job
- Whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the application has had any allegations made against him/her or concerns raised, which relate either to the safety and welfare of, or the applicants behaviour towards, children and young people. Details about the outcome of any such concern should be sought.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults. If not, for details of the referee's concerns and the reason why the person might be unsuitable.

Requests should remind the referee that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and that relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

Requests addressed to a candidate's current employer or a previous employer should also seek:

- Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post, salary and sickness record
- Specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to which relate to the safety and welfare of children or to the applicant's behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults and the outcome.
- Details of any allegations or concerns about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults and the outcome of these concerns.

On receipt of references:

- They should be checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily
- Prior to the confirmation of an appointment, referees should be telephoned to confirm their views on the candidate and to ensure information provided by the candidate is accurate.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time should give cause for concern.

1.13. Conditional Offer of Appointment, Pre-Appointment Checks and References

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be made on a conditional basis, dependent upon:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory written references, where possible confirmed by telephone.
- Verification of the candidate's identity.
- A satisfactory DBS or enhanced DBS Disclosure, which includes a check of DCSF List 99 (Information held under Section 142 of Education Act 2002) and PoCA/PoVA, including an overseas DBS check.
- Evidence of permission to work for those who are not nationals of a European Economic Area country.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional status/registration where required, i.e. GSCC for social workers, GTCE for teachers. GNC for nursing and midwifery
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction / probationary period where appropriate. Reviews of the successful candidates performance will be undertaken in line with relevant procedures and performance management processes.

All checks should be:

- Confirmed in writing;
- Documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to restrictions on the retention of information imposed by DBS regulations)
- Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or where there are discrepancies in the information provided

Where:

- The candidate is found to be on List 99 or the PoCA/PoVA List, or the DBS Disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court
- The applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application
- There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

These facts should be reported to the police and/or DCSF Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit. Anyone who is barred from work with children in a regulated position, as set out in Section 36 of Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work in any of the regulated positions set out in the Act. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to procure 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.

1.14. DBS Checks

As part of the pre-employment checks, a request for criminal records information is lodged with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

Any information held on an applicant concerning any convictions, warnings, fines, or other criminal information is provided in the form of a DBS disclosure form to potential employees.

The level of disclosure requested reflects the nature of the duties of the post and degree of contact with children or young people or with sensitive, confidential information. For Northumberland Schools this is that Enhanced DBS checks should be undertaken on staff and volunteers, unless there are specific reasons that this is not necessary for the specific post. A record should be kept of date disclosure obtained, by whom, level of disclosure and unique reference number. DBS checks should be:

- Treated as confidential
- Kept secure
- Destroyed as soon as no longer required (not normally longer than 6 months after decision to appoint)

Criminal Record

Employers must make a judgement about suitability, 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 of Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work in any of the regulated positions set out in the Act.

It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to procure 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.

1.14. Checks on Overseas Staff

The same checks should be made on overseas staff as for all other staff, including DBS checks. Where an applicant has worked or been resident overseas in the previous 5 years, the employer should obtain a check of the applicant's criminal record from the relevant authority in that country and seek additional information about an applicant's conduct. Not all countries provide this service and advice can be sought from the DBS Overseas Information Service.

Also for applicants from non EEA countries, evidence of permission to work in UK/work permit should be obtained

1.15. Employment Agency Staff

Where staff are recruited through an agency, written confirmation should be obtained that the appropriate checks have been undertaken. Similarly, safe recruitment practices need to be observed with sessional staff.

