

PART 11
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION
PROCEDURES FOR ALL
ADULTS WHO WORK WITH
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR ALL ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

1. All organisations which employ staff or volunteers to work with children¹ 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.
2. Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) 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”².
3. These procedures by SSCB 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.

SCOPE

4. 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. It would be good practice apply them to persons who have access to sensitive information about children however SSCB acknowledges that existing Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) regulations limit the ability of agencies to do so. This group of staff will be subject to the Vetting and Barring Scheme, to be rolled out from Autumn 2008. (See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/vettingandbarring/).
5. The principles of safe recruitment should 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.

¹ The term ‘Children’ is used throughout this procedure, includes young people under the age of 18.

² Working Together to Safeguard Children, Chapter 3 3.25

Rigorous Scrutiny

6. **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.

Training

7. All organisations involved in the selection of adults to work with children should ensure that staff with responsibility for recruitment undertake safe recruitment training which is compliant with this procedure and with appropriate emphasis on safeguarding children. This may be provided either via 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. SSCB will monitor the take up of such training to ensure that all organisations have appropriately trained staff involved in their recruitment processes. SSCB will seek to identify any gaps in the provision of appropriate training and provide advice and/or support in training development.

The Recruitment Process

8. It is important that the need to safeguard children is considered at every stage of the recruitment process. It is good practice for organisations to 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.

Preparing the Job Description and Person Specification

9. 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.
10. 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.

11. 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

12. 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.

Advertisements and Information for Applicants

13. Information to applicants should stress the organisations commitment to safeguarding children and should therefore include a statement to this effect.

14. 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
- How and to whom to apply
- Equal opportunities process
- Contact number for further information
- Ref to need for CRB check

15. 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/ Policy Statement should therefore be included in the pack. All candidates should be asked to bring proof of identity (see Short listing).

16. 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.

Application Form

17. All organisations should use a standardised application form which is used for all relevant staff vacancies and which is appropriate to the nature of the post.

18. 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.

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

References

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. Where an agency recruitment procedures do not allow for issues arising from the references to be addressed at interview (eg Assessment Centre processes) this should be done before an offer of employment.

23. 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.

24. 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.
25. Where the returned reference does not address all the questions asked in the reference request, further efforts should be made to obtain the information required. This should include following up written requests with a telephone call to the previous employer. At the very minimum, the previous employer should be asked to give assurances that they hold no information which might suggest the person is unsuitable to work with children.
26. 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.

The Selection Process

Selection Panel

- 27. 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.**

Shortlisting

28. 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.
29. All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.
30. 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.

31. 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.

Interviewing Short-Listed Candidates

32. 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 gender, marital status, race or ethnic origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or political belief.

33. Where staff will have direct and unsupervised contact with children, 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 where possible 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 understanding of safeguarding children.

34. At least one member of the interview panel should be trained in how best this can be done. Interview panels should avoid using hypothetical questions. Questions should be competency based, asking for examples from previous experience.

35. SSCB acknowledge that for some agencies it will not be appropriate or possible, due to the nature of the post, for these issues to be addressed at interview stage. (For example, where the post is not primarily to work with children, or where recruitment is via assessment centre) Where this is the case, agencies must ensure that these issues are covered during the probationary period.

36. 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 or prior to the offer of employment where this is not possible.

Children's Participation in Selection

37. Where staff will have substantial direct contact with children, agencies may wish to consider the involvement of children and young people in the selection process. Such involvement needs to be well planned and

supported in order to be effective and meaningful. The Safeguarding Board supports the involvement of children in the selection process, when appropriate, as good practice. Advice can be sought from Staffordshire County Council's Children and Young People's Voice Project, Tel: 01785 253878.

After the Interview

38. Panel members should separately score the candidate. 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.

Offer of Appointment to Successful Candidate

39. 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 /Vetting and Barring Scheme when in place.
- 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.

40. It is recommended that staff should not commence work with children until the CRB check has been returned. In specific circumstances where the service will be at risk without the required staffing levels (e.g. schools/day care) senior managers may undertake a full risk assessment to enable staff to work until such checks have been returned. This should always include ensuring the worker does not have any unsupervised contact with children.

Criminal Records

41. 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.

42. Anyone who is barred from work with children in a regulated position, as set out in Sect 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.

Checks on Oversea Staff

43. The same checks should be made on overseas staff as for all other staff, including CRB checks.
44. 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.

Recording

45. 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.
46. 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.
47. 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.

Contracts

48. All new employees should receive a written contract of employment which should be signed and returned by the employee. This should include codes of practice regarding standards of professional behaviour.

Induction and Supervision of Newly Appointed Staff

49. 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.

50. 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.
51. They should also be made aware of the organisation's personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the relevant whistle blowing policy.
52. 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.
53. Senior managers should ensure that their staffs 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.
54. SSCB advises that it is good practice for agencies to have a written policy which details the nature and frequency of the supervision of staff, whereby issues in relation suitability to work with children can be promptly identified and addressed.

Monitoring

55. 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.
56. 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.
57. See Section 7 of SSCB Safeguarding Procedures.

Contacts

58. Safeguarding Board member agencies should contact their HR department for information about their own agencies Safe Recruitment and Selection Procedure.
59. Other organisations who employ people who work with children, such as those in the private or voluntary sector who do not have access to advice in house or from other sources may seek advice as suggested

below. This may include advice regarding interview questions in relation to suitability to work with children.

60. Children's Day Care providers may contact Early Years, Tel: 01785 278298. Other independent sector providers may contact: Staffordshire Safeguarding Board Manager. Tel: 01785 277433.