

Developing a Safer Recruitment Procedure

3.14 Childminders and any assistants must be suitable; they must have the relevant training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Childminders must obtain a reference for any childminding assistants they recruit.

3.13 Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – 2025

What is safer recruitment?

Safer recruitment is a set of practises to make sure that the early years practitioners in your setting are suitable to work with children. This is vital in creating a safe and positive learning environment. It should be a continuous process of improvement. It should be included as part of an early years setting safeguarding policies and procedures.

What should be included in a safer recruitment policy?

Your safer recruitment policy statement should set out your organisation's commitment to:

- safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices
- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people
- responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
- a list of the supporting procedures that accompany the policy
- the date the policy comes into force and when you will review it.

The Recruitment Process

By following a consistent recruitment process, early years settings ensure they are minimising the risk of appointing an unsuitable candidate by creating clear records for future reference.

A good example of a safer recruitment process is as follows:

Job description and advertising the position

- How the setting create a job description and person specification for the role highlighting the safeguarding responsibilities.
- Where the setting advertise the role

Application form

- The need for all applicants to complete an application form and not a CV
- What the application form should include for example
 - a space to explain how they meet the person specification as outlined on the job description.
 - a self-disclosure form to confidentially highlight any relevant convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions that are on their record

- space for at least two references.
- their full employment history
- Information about their qualifications.
- Relevant experiences which make them suitable for the role

Shortlist applicants for interview.

- The procedure you carry out to ensure the process is fair and how many people are involved in this process

Interview process

- The procedure for setting interview questions and how these will be dependent on job roles.
- Who is responsible for inviting applicants for interview and the documentation that accompanies the invitation, also to include the documentation that candidates must bring with them to interview.
- What is the process for verifying the candidate's identity ie passport, driving licence
- Who will be on the interviewing panel
- During interview relevant questions determining suitability must be asked, e.g. Do you know of any reason why you may not be deemed suitable to work with children? Do you have any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings, which may affect your suitability to work with children? It is vital that gaps in employment history or frequent changes in employment are questioned.
- Should you conduct a practical test, such as observing a short activity with the children, how will this determine your judgment on the applicant's suitability for the role.

References

GP 3.20 CM 3.21 Providers/Childminders must obtain a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited. Providers should:

- *Not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern.*
- *Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.*
- *Ensure any references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.*
- *Not accept references from a family member.*
- *Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.*
- *Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.*
- *Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source.*
- *Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.*
- *Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the applicant.*
- *Establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post, and ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.*

GP 3.21 CM 3.22

References should be provided for previous employees upon request in a timely manner. When asked to provide references, providers should ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet

the harm threshold. They should not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

Offering the position

After conducting the interview process and all criteria have been met and conducted fairly, how do you ensure the applicant meets the following requirements

- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Ofsted suitability checks(for childminders)
- qualifications check (Group provider)
- a right to work check and an overseas check

The Disclosure and Barring Service

- Who is responsible for applying for an enhanced DBS for all new staff
- What is the procedure to be followed once these are received.
- How does this inform the induction process
- For childminder how Ofsted suitability checks are obtained [Childminders: report new adults in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Qualifications checks

- Who is responsible for checking and ensuring qualifications are suitable - refer to the DfE qualification checker [Check an early years qualification - GOV.UK](#)

Right to work check and an overseas check

The procedure the setting follows to ensure that any persons being employed are legal to work in the country –

How you obtain Criminal records checks for overseas applicants [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

How you checks if the applicants has the right to work in the UK [Checking a job applicant's right to work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

What is the settings procedure should they have concerns about an applicant?

- If any of the checks on an early years candidate reveal concerns, how does the setting assess whether they are suitable to work with children. What is the procedures for making these decisions. If necessary, early years settings must pass information on to relevant agencies, such as the police. [Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning](#)
- What is the procedure if the reference is vague, incomplete or highlights concerns, for example do you directly contact the referee to clarify and keep written records of any verbal conversations for the future. If it is a significant issue, do you ask for the referee for further information in writing.
- If a caution or conviction is highlighted on the self-disclosure form, how does the setting carry out a risk assessment to decide if an applicant is suitable.
- If a DBS returns and the applicant is on the barred list, they must not be given a role that requires them to work with children in regulated activities. It is illegal for an employer or early years setting to knowingly employ someone while they are on the barred list. [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

How to risk assess a potentially unsuitable candidate

An early years setting should be objective and rational when assessing the suitability of a candidate. Things to consider include:

- The nature and seriousness of the offence or incident.

- The length of time since the offence and of the sentence, if applicable.
- Whether it was a one-off or part of a regularly occurring pattern.
- The circumstance surrounding the offence.
- Any legal constraints relevant to the role.

The Induction Process

- When hiring a new early years practitioner/childminder assistant how does the setting conduct a consistent induction to help them understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting
- How do you ensure the staff member understands the settings processes including making sure they understand the settings policies and procedures around safeguarding and child protection including fire evacuation, health and safety and whistle blowing
- How you ensure the staff member attends all mandatory training
- A probationary or trial period.

The early years setting may also assign a mentor or buddy to support new practitioners throughout their probationary or trial period.

You can find out more about Safer Recruitment from the Department for Education, [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

The NSPCC [Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning](#)

The policy should be reviewed:

- Following any occasion when any part of the procedure has been implemented.
- Whenever changes to legislation are produced.
- At least annually.
- The policy and procedure needs to be signed by the registered person, include reviewed date and next review due date.
- If any changes are made to the policy when reviewed the staff and parents need to be informed.

Links to other policies & procedures

- Safeguarding Children
- Confidentiality
- Inclusion
- Supervision & Appraisals

This information is provided for guidance only. It is your responsibility to ensure that all statutory legal guidance is adhered to. Consideration needs to be given to any changes in legislation subsequent to the production of this information.