

Safer Recruitment Policy

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1. Introduction

360 CRS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This is defined as protecting children and young people from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care (*Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2015).

This document sets out how 360 CRS ensures all new employees are subject to the same recruitment process which safeguards and promotes the welfare and safety of children and discourages those who do not share our commitment to safeguarding from applying. This also allows structure for equality and allows each candidate to be shortlisted fairly.

This policy is written in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

2. Definitions

Child: A Child is up to the age of 16 and **young person** is between 16 - 18 years old.

Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Boards

Each local authority has a board which is made up of professionals who work in services for children and families including health, education, police, fire, and the voluntary sector. Members meet regularly to review safeguarding procedures and protocols throughout their region. The children's act 2004 requires all local authorities across England and Wales to have a designated local safeguarding children's board (LSCB). The task of each LSCB is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in their area.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

3. Prior to Recruitment

Prior to advertising roles within 360 CRS, job adverts and descriptions are reviewed to ensure they are up to date and specify the expectations of the role and the candidates we are seeking.

Jobs are advertised locally and include a safeguarding statement along with reference to enhanced DBS checks to deter inappropriate applicants from applying.

4. Initial Application

Expressions of interest including a CV are often received via the Job sites on which roles are advertised. CVs are reviewed and if the applicant appears suitable an application pack is sent to them which includes an application form, health declaration, and job description and specification.

Completed application forms and health declarations are scrutinised for discrepancies, gaps in employment, or any information that requires further exploration. Key points are recorded on a separate document called a recruitment narrative, which will follow the applicant through their early journey and be discussed during the interview process.

On some occasions, it may be appropriate to invite a candidate to interview prior to receiving the completed application form. This must be on the understanding that the application form must be fully completed, scrutinised and any issues explored prior to the applicant proceeding any further within the recruitment process.

5. Interviews

It is always preferable for interviews to be held face to face in a suitable meeting room or office space. When this is not practical, initial interviews may be conducted via Microsoft Teams, but the candidate must be seen in person prior to making a formal job offer or commencing employment.

Interviews should be conducted by two suitably qualified members of the management team, one of whom must have completed appropriate Safer Recruitment training which remains in date. On rare occasions, an initial interview may be conducted by one person with appropriate Safer Recruitment training, if it is ensured that this is followed up with a second stage interview with a second member of the management team.

To assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and young people at 360 CRS, the questions asked during the interview relate to skills, qualifications, work experience/history and personal qualities of the candidate and their capacity to fulfil the requirements of the post. Questions may vary slightly depending on the position applied for. Any gaps in employment identified on the application form will be explored at this stage. If an applicant has previously worked in social care, we will gain verification of the reason why the employment ended. The interview is recorded on the applicant's Recruitment Narrative.

For Residential Support Workers, no further stages are required unless the initial interview was only conducted by one member of the management team, in which case a second stage must be arranged to include a second appropriate member of the team.

For prospective Deputy or Registered Managers, a second stage interview should be arranged which will take place on a more informal basis and may include an additional member of the management team to seek a third perspective.

6. Job Offers

Offers of employment are initially made verbally before being followed up by a formal offer letter.

All job offers are subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references, as well as the availability of the information required as per Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations (2015).

7. Disclosure and Barring Service

All Registered Managers are required to register with the DBS update service and maintain their yearly subscription, this is at the cost of 360 CRS.

All staff are required to undergo an enhanced criminal record check when accepting a role within the company, and prior to having access to our children or young people without direct supervision.

If the applicant is from overseas, where possible, we will carry out extra checks and obtain a criminal records check, or 'Certificate of Good Character', from their country of origin. This also applies to applicants who have lived or worked abroad.

8. References

A minimum of two employment references will be obtained. These will include the applicants current or most recent employer. Referees are contacted directly and 360 CRS does not accept open references or references addressed to 'whom it may concern', if this is the case then further exploration is required to understand the relevance. Referees are clearly asked if they have any safeguarding concerns regarding the applicant or any concerns about them working with children. Once written references are returned, telephone verification is made to confirm it has been completed by the correct individual and follow up any discrepancies or explore details further.

Once these checks are complete, HR will liaise with the Registered Manager, and as long as there are no concerns or discrepancies provided the applicant will be able to commence employment.

9. Agency Staff

360 CRS does not intend to use agency staff unless as a last resort. In circumstances where there is no other option but to use agency staff, 360 CRS will ensure that all information in relation to Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 has been obtained. Agency workers will never work alone and will always work alongside an experienced member of staff.

360 CRS are in the process of identifying appropriate agencies that will work with the team to support staffing issues with appropriately trained team members.

10. Information to be held in Employee's files

Each employee's file is stored electronically on a secure HR drive. Relevant information and documentation relating to Schedule 2 is also uploaded to ClearCare where it can be accessed and checked by Registered Managers prior to employees starting work in their home.

Under the Children's Homes Regulations (2015), Schedule 2, it is essential that the following information is held on each person that works for 360 CRS, before they work unsupervised with the children:

Schedule 2

- Proof of identification including a recent photograph.
- Enhanced Disclosure Check.
- Two written references, including one from the person's most recent employer if any.
- Verification where reasonably practicable of the reasons why any spell of working with children or vulnerable adults in the past, ended.
- Documentary evidence of qualifications and training certificates relevant for the position.
- Full employment history, with satisfactory written explanation of any gaps.

Exceptional Circumstances Where Some Information Not Immediately Available (except Disclosures):

Where the Enhanced Disclosure Check has been satisfactorily completed, but some of the other items under Schedule 2 are still outstanding, any staff may only work at the home under the following conditions:

- They are directly supervised, at all times, at a level which prevents them from unsupervised contact with the children in the home.
- Where the circumstances are exceptional (e.g., not a regular occurrence).
- Where all steps are being actioned to chase up any outstanding information.
- The Registered Manager/Provider has endeavoured to take steps to avoid the person working until the checks come through (e.g., ensuring staff that are satisfactorily checked and do not require direct supervision are given priority of the shift).

Staff may only continue to work where the checks are completed and of a satisfactory outcome.

Other information required

In addition to the items under Schedule 2, we also require the following to be held on any person that works for 360 CRS

- Completed application form
- Completed health form
- Details of two next-of-kin
- Evidence of current address (utility bill must be dated within 3 months)
- National Insurance Number
- Bank/building society details

11. Induction

The induction process forms part of the probationary period which is 6 months. This period can be extended if required or reduced in exceptional circumstances, for example if the employee has prior experience and training in the role. During the induction period, the employee will be supervised by a more experienced member of staff and will complete all mandatory training. During the induction process, employees will cover the induction basics and complete mandatory training in:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Medication
- Fire Awareness
- Food hygiene
- Health and Safety
- Breakaway and behaviour management training

Additional training is also provided as standard, however the above is the minimum mandatory training required for new starters.

Exceptional circumstances can be made if the staff member is able to provide evidence of this training being completed in the last 6 months of their previous employment.

New staff members are provided with an Induction book which includes:

- An overview of 360 CRS, our ethos, and safeguarding statement.
- The principles of residential childcare and links to legislation, guidance, and resources.
- A step-by-step guide to the information and tasks that staff members are required to become familiar with whilst settling into their new role.
- Space for staff to record and sign that they have read and understood company policies.
- Helpful guidance and information for staff in relation to topics such as report writing, the PACE model, attachment styles, professional boundaries, and further recommended reading.
- 360 CRS 'how to' guidance.

Staff inductions will be supported and overseen by the Deputy and/or Registered Managers within the home, with supervisions initially taking place fortnightly with new staff to discuss and review progress.

New employees are discussed regularly between the registered manager and Responsible Individual/ Operations Manager to ensure satisfactory progress is being made.

12. References for employees who have left or are leaving

Any reference requests for existing or past staff members must be authorised by the head office. Staff and Managers are not permitted to provide references without consultation or authorisation from the Operations Manager/ Responsible Individual, due to them not having access to all personnel information (e.g., disciplinary matters, Child Protection concerns).

13. Additional Information and Further Reading and Guidance to be Read in conjunction with this Policy:

Links to other policies and guidance
The Children’s Homes Regulations (2015)
HM Government: Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2024)
The Human Rights Act 1998
United Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1991)
The Children’s Act 1989/ 2004

Reviews and Amendments

Date	Name	Comments
20.03.2023	Richard Ellis-Tole	Verified and updated
24.09.2024	Richard Ellis- Tole	Updated and Regionalised