

Assistant Chief Executive's Human Resources

Safer Recruitment Guidance

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Please note:

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Council's full Recruitment and Selection policy

Introduction

This guidance document provides an overview of the Council's recruitment and selection process and highlights the key safeguarding elements of the process. Recruiters need to ensure they fully understand these elements and principles and adhere to them closely **when recruiting for all vacancies**, not just when recruiting people to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

A well planned and structured recruitment procedure is vital in ensuring the best person is recruited to the role. It is even more important when recruiting people to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Robust safer recruitment processes are essential to try to ensure we have a safe, competent and knowledgeable workforce. They also reduce the possibility of those people who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults entering the workforce.

The term unsuitable can refer to an applicant who:

- Does not take their responsibilities seriously
- Questions the need for stringent health, safety and welfare requirements
- Fails to demonstrate respect for children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Evades questions relating to safeguarding
- Has little understanding of the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Has a dubious approach to the use of force

Summary of safer practice in recruitment

Safer practice in recruitment means that the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount at every stage of the process. It starts with detailed planning of the recruitment process and, where the post is advertised, ensuring the advertisement makes clear the council's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It also requires consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information about job applicants. Key elements should include:

- Ensuring the job profile refers to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring the person profile refers specifically to the suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or in a setting where children or vulnerable adults are present
- Obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and exploring and satisfactorily resolving any gaps, discrepancies, or anomalies
- Obtaining independent professional and character references that specifically request information about an applicant's suitability to work with or be around children, young people, or vulnerable adults
- An interview that explores the applicant's suitability to work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults as well as their suitability for the post
- Verifying an applicant's identity
- Verifying they have the right to work in the UK
- Verifying the applicant has a professional or vocational qualification as claimed
- Checking their employment history (including any gaps in employment) and other experiences since leaving education
- Obtaining the required checks – criminal records check at the enhanced level + barred list check (where appropriate)

Even the most careful selection process cannot identify all those who pose a risk to children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Once the appointment has been made it is vital that robust

supervision and performance management reviews are in place to ensure their work is scrutinised and any concerns that emerge are highlighted and responded to.

Training

It is a council recommendation that all recruiting managers must have completed the council's recruitment and selection workshop/training to ensure they have been trained in the legal and policy framework as well as in the techniques and skills involved in recruitment and selection. This training should be updated every three years via completion of the council's recruitment and selection e-learning module.

Planning

Detailed planning of all stages of the recruitment process is vital to ensure that the successful applicant is the right person for the job and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It is essential that adequate time is allocated for all associated tasks so that safeguarding issues are not overlooked or not carried out thoroughly.

At the start of the recruitment process, a selection panel needs to be established which has responsibility for appointing the person who best matches the person profile. The panel are also responsible for determining the shortlisting and selection dates.

To reduce the risk of prejudice or bias, selection panels must have a minimum of two recruiters, preferably three.

Once membership of the recruitment panel has been agreed upon, a timetable should be drawn up of what is to be done when and by whom. It is also recommended that the panel members are involved at every stage of the recruitment process, to ensure continuity. This should also reduce the possibilities of errors or oversights being made, in appointing a candidate who is committed to safeguarding.

Job profile

The job profile should be clear, concise and a fair representation of the post, designed to attract applicants. It is not necessary or desirable to attempt to produce a highly definitive description of the post. It should provide an overview of the post and an introductory sentence which states its purpose.

It must clearly state:

- The main duties and responsibilities of the post
- The level of criminal records check required
- The degree of responsibility, held by the postholder for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, must be clearly outlined

Person profile

The person profile describes the criteria that an applicant must fulfil to be suitable for the post, drawn up from a critical examination of the job profile. The criteria in the person profile should be recognisable and measurable. It is important that experience, skills and competencies etc. which are required to do the job are set out clearly and precisely. All candidates must be assessed consistently against the person profile during the selection process. Key points to include:

☑	Qualifications and experience, and any other pre-requisites for the post in relation to working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults
☑	The competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate to fulfil the responsibilities of the role The ability to ensure safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults which should include:
☑	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation to work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults• Building and maintaining appropriate relationships with children, young people or vulnerable adults including issues of boundaries• Coping strategies for working with children, young people or vulnerable adults with challenging behaviour• Attitudes concerning the use of authority and discipline when working with children
☑	The common core skills and knowledge required such as effective communication and engagement, knowledge of child and young person development, supporting transitions, multi-agency working, sharing information etc.

The advert

Adverts need to be placed in relevant media, keeping in mind costs and access to minority groups. When drafting the advert, it should be clear and concise containing all the relevant information whilst avoiding the use of jargon or abbreviations. The wording of the advert should include:

- Job title, salary range, type of contract, hours of work and where the job will be located
- Brief description of the organisation and/or the service or team where the role will be based
- Brief description of the role
- Key requirements for the role (taken from the person profile)
- Closing date, how to apply, contact details for informal enquiries + date of interview
- Safeguarding statement: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults
- The requirement for a criminal records check and the level of check

Application form

Detailed instructions on how to complete the application form are available on the council's job site. This ensures that all applicants have access to the same core set of data, therefore discrepancies or anomalies are more easily spotted and the information supplied is consistent for shortlisting purposes. The council's application form contains all the necessary requirements. These are:

- Identity details: full current and former names, current address and National Insurance number. All these help to ascertain an applicant's correct identity
- Relevant academic/professional/vocational qualifications, date and awarding body + registration with professional bodies
- Full chronological history of employment since leaving secondary school, including voluntary work, education and training. Reasons for leaving jobs. Details of any time not covered by education or employment
- Details of referees to cover the last three-year period. At least one referee must be the current (or most recent) employer
- Details of any criminal conviction or caution
- A section for applicants to outline their suitability for the post – this should clearly relate to the person profile

In addition to the application form and guidance any relevant supporting information should be made available to applicants including the job and person profile and information about the organisation in particular safeguarding policy, child protection statement etc.

Shortlisting

All panel members must take part in the shortlisting process. Applications should be checked to ensure they are fully completed. Any anomalies or gaps should be noted to check with the applicant if they are invited to interview. Gaps in employment, frequent changes in employment without a career or salary progression, or a move from permanently working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults to temporary, agency or supply work also need to be explored with the candidate.

The fundamental principle of shortlisting is that each applicant is assessed against the shortlisting criteria from the job & person profile and not in relation to other irrelevant criteria. At the end of the shortlisting process the panel should decide which candidates they would like to invite to the selection process.

The Selection Process

The invitation to selection process as well as practicalities such as time, venue, directions etc, should detail the structure of the selection process and make reference to the specific methods of assessing candidates' suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This may be an interview panel with young people, leading a session, or giving a presentation for example, which will be used as part of the selection process.

The invitation should also state what right to work documentation is necessary for the candidate to bring to the selection process.

The selection process must be an objective assessment of each candidate, made through selection methods, appropriate to the position, and measured against the essential criteria from the job & person profile. All the required documentation (the shortlisting matrix) should be completed for each candidate to not only aid decision making but to also provide an accurate written record of the candidate's performance and assessment against the job & person profile criteria.

The Interview

The questions asked by the interview panel are very important in safer recruitment. By asking the right questions, the chance of appointing inappropriate candidates is lessened, the interests and well-being of children and vulnerable adults are protected, and the risk of abuse minimised.

The interview, although structured and formal, should not be an interrogation, but a structured conversation that deals with the key issues. The panel should meet prior to the interview to set the interview questions and to decide who will ask which questions. Ideally safeguarding questions should be asked by one member of the panel whilst the other panel members observe the candidate's responses and behaviour.

The questions should be backed up by a series of probes and follow-ups to give the panel a full picture of the areas being investigated. This will also give an insight into the candidate's motivations, opinions, beliefs and attitudes, which will help the panel make a detailed assessment of their suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Questions should be based around those areas in the person profile that have not been conclusively assessed through other assessment methods or from the application form.

As well as asking the pre-prepared interview questions any inconsistencies in information, gaps in employment history or ambiguities from the application form will need to be clarified during the interview.

Pre-employment checks

Once a decision has been made on the most suitable candidate, the process of ensuring that they are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children should continue. The following employment checks must be carried out before a candidate takes up a position.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proof of the candidate's right to work in the UK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Criminal records check at the appropriate level
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proof of the candidate's identity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evidence of relevant qualifications / accreditation / professional membership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Confirmation of medical fitness (dependant on the post)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	References covering the last three years of employment including current or most recent employer

All documents seen should be the originals, where possible. If originals cannot be produced by the candidate, it is their responsibility to obtain replacement documents or written confirmations. It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to obtain all necessary pre-employment documents to complete the recruitment pack. **It is council policy that successful candidates cannot start in post before the recruitment pack is checked and validated by the HR Service Centre.**

References

References are an integral part of checking a candidate's suitability to work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults by obtaining accurate and impartial information about their work history and character. All references should be sought directly from the referees detailed on the candidate's application form. References should cover a three-year period and include one from the current or previous employer. References from relatives or from people writing solely as friends or partners are not acceptable. In the case of an applicant who is not currently working with children, young people or vulnerable adults but has in the past, a reference from that period of employment should be obtained.

On receipt of the references the recruiting manager should read the written reference provided thoroughly to ensure that the referee has answered all the questions on the reference form. Also check if there are any vague or ambiguous statements which may require further probing with the referee. It is also vital to compare the information the candidate has provided on their application form about themselves in terms of their experience and background with the information provided by the referee. The Recruiting Manager must sign and date the reference form in the appropriate box to confirm they have reviewed the reference and if necessary, discussed any areas of concern with the referee.

Please note, some areas such as **Residential Services in CYPS** may have their own service-specific policies and best practice standards around references, meaning where possible references need to be verbally verified. In such cases, please use the following form and include it in the Recruitment Pack – [Verification of References](#)

Informing Candidates

For successful candidates a conditional offer of employment can be made using the Conditional Offer Letter. This will be followed up with a Contract of Employment which is sent once the successful candidate is set up on ManageHR. **It is council policy that successful candidates should not be set up on ManageHR until the recruitment pack is checked and validated by the HR Service Centre.**

Unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible that they have not been successful. Constructive feedback should also be offered.

Induction

In order to help employees settle into their new environment and start performing effectively, induction and probation arrangements are important.

Induction training needs to cover the following most of which can be found in the e-induction:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information about the new environment, introducing new colleagues
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information about the organisation, its purpose, aims, structure, policies, procedures and priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Their role and responsibility in the workplace
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The terms and conditions of their employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduction to child or adult protection policies and procedures including roles and responsibilities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information about ongoing training in child or adult protection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Familiarisation with local policies, procedures and resources.

For support and guidance please contact the Recruitment Team - hrpRecruitSupport@rotherham.gov.uk

Date Revised	Date of next review	Summary of Changes	Author
11/01/2021	January 2023	Update to wording	Simon Neves
24/8/2022	January 2023	Additional wording for verification of references for Residential Recruitment	Simon Neves
24/01/2023	January 2025	Update to wording	Simon Neves