Safer Recruitment: Standards and guidance for organisations who work with children and young people

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Richmond and Kingston LSCBs
Safer Recruitment: Standards and guidance for organisations who work with children and young people

Introduction

1. Scope:
These standards and guidance apply to all organisations, services and settings which employ staff or recruit volunteers to work with or on behalf of children and young people (i.e. 0 to 18 years of age), including:
- Statutory, independent, private, voluntary, social enterprise and community organisations providing services for children and young people
- People and organisations who provide human resources or personnel advice or services to the above organisations
- Employment agencies and businesses that provide staff who are going to work with children and young people
- Organisations that have contracts with local authorities and other organisations to provide services in settings where there are children and young people.

Note: The term ‘organisation/s’ will be used to cover all of the above throughout this document.

To comply with the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people all such organisations should adopt consistent, fair and thorough recruitment and selection procedures and other human resources management processes that aim to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children and young people and to ensure that those recruited are suitable to work with them.

The standards and guidance set out in this document are in accordance with national guidance and legislation on safer recruitment and selection e.g. Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2013); Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 and Keeping children safe in education (DfE 2014); Safer Recruitment a Guide for NHS Employers (NHS 2006); Safer Care Act 2000; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2007. Additionally, reference has been made to the Safer Recruitment Training programme produced by NCSL (National College for School Leadership) and Safe Network Standards framework.

This is general guidance and does not cover all aspects of recruitment and selection or other employment practices. It is intended to supplement and enhance organisations’ existing recruitment processes, guidance and training and to promote the consideration of issues relating to child protection and safeguarding at every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

Richmond and Kingston Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) expect all partner organisations to ensure that arrangements are in place for “safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check” (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2013).

Additionally, through Section 11 multi agency safeguarding audits, the LSCBs
seek to monitor and measure compliance with safer recruitment practice across all organisations and to challenge poor practice, where it is identified. The LSCBs provide multi agency safer recruitment training and expects partner organisations to take part in this as required, so that staff who are involved in recruitment are suitably trained.

2. Underpinning Principles:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount
- Organisations should demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.
- The same safer recruitment standards should apply when appointing anyone who works in a setting where there are children and young people, i.e. not just those working directly with them, as they are likely to be perceived by children as a safe and trustworthy adult.
- All organisations involved in the recruitment and selection of adults to work with children should ensure that relevant staff undertake safer recruitment training such as that offered by the LSCBs’ training programme. Richmond and Kingston LSCBs will monitor take up of, and evaluate, such training to ensure that organisations have appropriately trained staff involved in workforce recruitment.
- It is important to plan the recruitment process from the outset, so that there is enough time at each stage to enable the process to be managed fairly and thoroughly.
- Employers should have explicit written recruitment and selection policy and procedures that comply with national and local guidance. The policy should detail all aspects of the process and should link to the organisation’s safeguarding and child protection policy and other relevant policies, such as managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing and complaints procedures.
- Safer recruitment should be seen as part of a culture of ongoing vigilance, safer working practice and supported and well-trained staff, so that adults working with children are clear about appropriate and inappropriate practice and are able to raise concerns when these arise. Organisations and individuals should refer to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice For Adults Who Work With Children and Young People, Nov 2007, downloadable from: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00311/

Safer Recruitment and Selection – the Process:

1. Policy statement
Employing organisations should have explicit written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures that comply with national and local guidance. The statement should detail all aspects of the process and should link to the organisation’s child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures.

The policy statement should incorporate a statement about the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. For example:

‘This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment’
The statement should be included in all documents and communications associated with recruiting and selecting staff, such as:

- Advertisements
- Publicity, information, websites
- Candidate information packs
- Job descriptions and Person Specifications
- Induction training
- Competency frameworks.

2. Planning
Planning is essential to the whole recruitment and selection process. It is important that **enough time is given to each stage of the process** to enable a thorough and professional approach to be adopted throughout. A well-planned and structured recruitment process will give the best chance of recruiting the right person for the post and minimise the risk of making an unsuitable appointment.

Time should be given to considering what mix of qualities, skills, qualifications and experience a successful candidate needs to demonstrate and whether there are any specific matters that may need to be addressed at any stage of the process, e.g. in the job description, advertisement or interview.

Consideration should be given, at an early stage, to **identifying and allocating roles and responsibilities**, e.g. who should be involved in the shortlisting and interviewing of candidates and who will be responsible for other aspects of the process, such as collating candidate information packs and other materials or resources.

**Involving children and young people** in the recruitment and selection process can be considered, and is recognised as good practice in many organisations. This may take a variety of forms e.g. a young person’s interview panel, observations of the candidates’ undertaking an activity with children etc, but will need to be carefully planned and the young people properly prepared.

Sufficient time should be set aside for each stage so that safeguarding considerations are not overlooked and **queries or issues can be properly followed up**, i.e. ensuring that any information that could be important in determining whether someone is suitable to work with children is not missed. For example, allowing enough time for **references to be submitted and considered prior to interview**, so that these can be considered by the interview panel, any further clarification from a referee can be sought, where necessary, and specific questions included in an individual’s interview, if agreed as appropriate.

3. Advertisement
It is important that a clear message is sent to prospective applicants, from the outset, that your organisation is alert to safeguarding issues and has appropriate polices in place. The advertisement should include reference to the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding (see Section 1 above) and make clear that appropriate vetting checks will be carried out.

Such measures are known to deter abusers from applying for such posts – they are unlikely to proceed with an application in these circumstances and will look for a softer target.

4. Information to applicants
Depending on the organisation, a range of information may be provided for candidates who have responded to an advertisement or who are seeking to volunteer. As well as **relevant background information about the organisation or post**, all information should highlight
the importance placed by the organisation on a rigorous selection and recruitment process, should **demonstrate the commitment to safeguarding** and make it clear that this is considered ‘everybody’s business’. For example, applicants could be sent a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy or be signposted to Richmond or Kingston’s LSCB website and the London Child Protection Procedures.

**Include statements about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post** in the job description and person specification. If the organisation has a code of conduct or guidance on safer working practice, consideration should be given to including information on this. The information should **stress that the qualifications (where applicable) and identity of the shortlisted candidates will be thoroughly checked** and that where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is appropriate this will be carried out prior to appointment.

The **Disclosure and Barring Service** was established in December 2012 and has responsibility for managing both the criminal records and barring arrangements of the scheme.

The **Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** sets out the foundation for the DBS scheme. The Disclosure and Barring Service has an Independent Barring Board (IBB) with responsibility for taking barring decisions on new referrals and the management of two barred lists which replaced the previous List 99, PoCA and PoVA Lists.

The system aims to provide employers with a quicker and more effective vetting and barring service. All disclosures for work with children and vulnerable persons are to be at an enhanced level for Regulated Activity.

The DBS now has an Update Service in place in order assist in the portability of DBS disclosure checks when a worker moves from one job to another in the same workforce and in carrying our re-checks.

Referrals should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) when an employer or organisation believes a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children. Under the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006, the following groups have the power to make a referral to the DBS:

**Duty to refer**
- regulated activity suppliers (employers and volunteer managers)
- personnel suppliers

**Power to refer**
- local authorities (safeguarding role)
- education and library boards
- health and social care (HSC) trusts (NI)
- keepers of registers eg General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council
- supervisory authorities eg Care Quality Commission, Ofsted

Please refer to the [DBS website](#) for more information.
The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children’s Services to help safeguard children. They should be informed of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children,

Contact the LADO through our Children’s safeguarding Single Point of Access (SPA) Team. Phone 020 8891 7969 or email spa@richmond.gov.uk for Richmond or phone 020 8547 5008 or email spa@rbk.kingston.gov.uk for Kingston.

5. Application Form

**Standardised application forms should be used.** It is not good practice to accept a CV (Curriculum Vitae) drawn up by an applicant in place of an application form. A CV will only provide the information an applicant wishes to present i.e. what they want to tell you. You will not get all the information you need and it is harder to see how an applicant meets the selection criteria. An application form will ask for all the information you need and will provide a common set of information on all applicants to support an equitable shortlisting and selection process.

A good application form will ask for details of all of the following from all applicants:

**Personal details**
- Full name and any previous names
- Date of birth
- Current address and other addresses in the last 5 years
- National Insurance number

**Qualifications**
- Any academic and/or vocational qualifications obtained
- Dates they were gained
- Details of the awarding bodies

**Full history since leaving school**
In chronological order since leaving secondary education, including:
- Further or higher education or training undertaken, with start and end dates
- Full or part-time employment history and/or voluntary work undertaken, with start and end dates
- Reasons for leaving employment
- Explanation of periods not in employment, education or training

**Details of referees**
- Two referees at minimum
- One referee should be the applicant’s current or most recent employer
- Wherever possible, a referee from a previous role or post where the person worked with children
- Not those acting solely in the capacity as friend or relative

**Personal statement**
- Personal skills, qualities and experience that are relevant to the post or role
- How s/he meets the person specification
Signed declaration
• About any criminal record – cautions, convictions or bind-overs (see below)
• That the person is not barred or disqualified from working with children and young people or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body
• About any family or close relationships with existing employees
• That all information provided is true

Additional information
• i.e. information that may be required for some posts, such as proof of registration with a professional body e.g. GTC for teachers or HCPC for Social Workers

Additional explanatory guidance should be provided with the application form:
• An explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that, therefore, all convictions, cautions and bindovers, including those regarded as ‘spent’ must be declared. Details of any criminal record should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ‘Confidential’.
• That, where appropriate, the successful applicant will be required to provide a DBS disclosure at the appropriate level for the post.
• That the employer will take up references on short-listed candidates and may approach previous employers to verify particular experience or qualifications prior to interview.
• That the employer will seek information from referees about any disciplinary procedures that have been applied in relation to misconduct or unsuitable behaviour relating to children and young people, and/or whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and, if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary action.
• That providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal, if the applicant is already in post, and possible referral to the police.

6. Job Description and Person Specification
In addition to stating the main duties and responsibilities of the post, the job description should clearly set out the extent of the relationships with, and responsibility for, children with whom the postholder will have contact. Also, include a statement on the postholder’s responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.

The person specification should detail:
• The qualifications and experience needed for the role
• The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate
• How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process

7. Scrutinising Applications and Shortlisting
At least two people should be involved in the scrutiny of applications and the shortlisting of candidates, in order to ensure objectivity and avoid subjective judgements. There is less chance of something being missed if two or more people separately scrutinise applications. The scrutiny should ensure that application forms are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies and that gaps in employment are identified and noted. Incomplete application forms should not be accepted and should be returned for completion.

When shortlisting, apply the same criteria from the person specification consistently with all applications. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps identified in the scrutiny process should be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist an applicant.
Consider reasons, where given and where not, for gaps in employment or repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or significant changes in role or status. These may need to be explored further at interview with individuals or referees, if the applicant is shortlisted.

8. Taking up References

The information that can be obtained from referees can be very important and the purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. Wherever possible, obtain references on shortlisted candidates before interview, so that any concerns or issues raised in the reference can be explored further with the referee or can be taken up with the candidate at interview before a final decision is made.

Note: this may not be the usual practice in some organisations, and requests for references may be refused prior to interview. However, this is not good practice in relation to safeguarding children, and the validity of this safer recruitment practice may need to be emphasised to such organisations. Similarly, it is not recommended good practice to accede to an applicant's request for their employer not to be approached for a reference prior to interview.

References should always be sought directly from the referee. Employers should not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate themselves, or on 'open' references or testimonials, e.g. addressed ‘To whom it may concern’ These may be written as a result of a compromise agreement and are unlikely to include any reference to concerns or any adverse comments. In exceptional circumstances, a verbal reference may need to be sought, but it should always be followed up in writing, or typed up by the employer and sent back to the referee for signature.

Wherever possible, get a reference relating to a previous post or role where the candidate worked with children and young people. Always get a reference from the current employer, where applicable. If the candidate has indicated that s/he doesn’t want a reference sought from the current employer, the reasons for this should be followed up with the candidate and their validity assessed. Consider further action that may need to be taken if there are concerns. If the candidate has not been previously employed in any capacity, or is or has been independent or freelance, ensure that referees named in the application form are not solely a friend or family member i.e. those who may not provide an objective reference.

Referees should always be asked to comment on the candidate’s suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification, and in particular, their suitability to work with children. To ensure greater consistency in references and to gain objective, verifiable information on each candidate, consideration should be given to devising a reference proforma, with a standard set of questions for all referees to answer.

The referee should be asked to confirm whether the candidate has:

- been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions;
- had any allegations made against him/her or concerns raised in relation to the safety and welfare of children or their behaviour towards children

Details about the concerns or allegations should be sought.

9. Considering References

Active consideration should be given to references received on each shortlisted candidate. It is considered best practice to contact at least one referee or organisation providing a reference to verify that the reference has indeed been provided by them and is for the shortlisted candidate and the post being recruited.
Compare the information provided by the referee with that given by the candidate in their application form and check for any discrepancies. These may need to be followed up at interview. Consider whether the referee has answered the questions asked in the request for reference and the detail included.

Vague or ambiguous statements, generalities or inconsistencies, or an apparently ‘agreed reference’, may raise doubts about the person’s suitability and should be followed up and explored further with the referee. If this is done by telephone, a written record of the conversation should be made, and if there are significant issues, the understanding of these confirmed in writing to the referee. This is particularly important in cases where the candidate’s application is not taken any further, or where the issues need to be explored further at interview with the candidate.

Currently some organisations will only confirm minimum details in references, e.g. that the person has worked for the organisation between a stated period and little more. In such cases, efforts should be made to contact the referee and explain the requirements of safer recruitment in order to get the more specific information required. If this is a verbal exchange, it should always be followed up in writing, or typed up by the employer and sent back to the referee for signature.

10. Other Checks Before or At the Interview Stage

If a shortlisted candidate claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children and young people, or that is particularly relevant to the post applied for, that may not be verified by a reference it is good practice to check the facts before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored during the interview. This can be done by contacting the relevant body or the previous employer. A written record should be made of the information received.

If this is not manageable, candidates should be asked to provide original certificates or diplomas for all the academic or vocational qualifications required for, or relevant to, the post at the interview stage, so that these can be checked by the employer. It is important that these are also verified with the awarding body, as it is easy to produce authentic-looking documents using desk-top publishing software and home printers.

The identity of the candidate will need to be checked in order to ensure that they are who they claim to be, by referring to original documents, e.g full birth certificate or passport. Where a DBS disclosure is applicable to the post, all candidates should be required to bring documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy DBS requirements e.g. passport, photo driving license, utility bills (for address) etc.

Where the post requires the post-holder to be licensed or registered with a professional body, e.g. teachers, childminders, nurses, such registration should be checked and verified.

All candidates should confirm that they have the right to work in the UK. Employers will need to check that all candidates have the right to live and work in this country.

For candidates from overseas, the same processes and checks should apply, but more time may be needed to obtain references and for checking qualifications, possible criminal record etc.
11. Interviews

It is important **not to rely on unstructured or unplanned interviews** as they will only give limited information and often only what the candidate wants to talk about or how they want to be seen. **Interviews should always be face-to-face**, even if there is only one candidate.

Interviews should be planned and the **interviewers should be well-briefed and appropriately trained in recruitment practice**, wherever possible. At minimum, interviewers should be clear about how the interviews are going to be conducted and what they are expected to do.

*Note: In order to comply with best practice, there is an expectation that at least one person on every interview panel for relevant posts has successfully undertaken an LSCB or nationally approved safer recruitment training programme.*

**It is recommended good practice for interviews to be conducted by a minimum of two people**, but in many circumstances a larger panel will be appropriate. A panel of two or more interviewers allows one to observe and assess the candidate and make notes whilst the other is asking a question and talking to the candidate. These roles can be interchanged throughout the course of the interview, as planned. This can also reduce the possibility of any disagreement about what was said or asked during the interview.

The **interview panel** members should:

- have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment
- be aware of, or trained in, safer recruitment practice
- meet before the interviews to agree a common set of questions for all candidates that will test candidates’
  - specific skills, abilities, previous experience and competence
  - attitude towards children and young people,
  - commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- agree additional questions covering any issues to be explored with individual candidates arising from application forms or references, e.g. gaps in employment history
- give consideration to exercises or activities that will enable panel members to assess how well each candidate interacts with others e.g. role play, group exercises, leading an activity involving children.
- consider whether to ask candidates whether they wish to declare anything in the light of the requirement for a DBS disclosure or DBS registration.

Safeguarding **interview questions** should aim to draw out candidates’ actual experience of working with children and young people, rather than asking hypothetical questions that lead to a ‘textbook’ response. For example, asking:

- ‘how would you deal with (and give a situation)’ ...
- ‘what would you do if ’ ....
- ‘give an example of how you have dealt with (e.g. concern about a child’s or a colleague’s behaviour)’ ....

will give a clearer picture of the appropriateness of a candidate’s attitudes and future behaviour. Similarly, a question about ‘how has your practice been influenced by new guidance and legislation’, or ‘what could you contribute to the improvement of safeguarding in this organisation or setting’ will give the panel a better picture of each candidate’s understanding and abilities than a question such as ‘what do you know about (the latest legislation or guidance)’ that they could have read up on and memorised before the interview.

The **interview** should assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with children and young people. All candidates should be
assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation. All gaps or discrepancies in applications or references should be fully explored. If the answers given by a candidate do not demonstrate the positive behaviours and attributes required, an appointment should not be made.

By following these guidelines, at the end of the interview process the panel should be in a position to make the right recruitment decision so that those who are not suitable to work with children, for whatever reason, do not get the opportunity to get access to them through their job. The costs of, and risks from, making the wrong decisions can be high.

12. Offer of Appointment
An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be **conditional on all pre-employment checks having been satisfactorily completed**, i.e.

Pre-employment checks:
- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of the candidate’s identity
- A satisfactory DBS disclosure, where appropriate.
- A children’s barred list check where appropriate (*Note: this can only be requested for specific roles which involve regular unsupervised access to children and young people.*)
- Verification of medical fitness
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional status, where applicable e.g. registration with professional body
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction or probationary period, where applicable
- For overseas candidates; that they are legally able to work in UK

All checks should be:
- Confirmed in writing
- Documented and/or photocopied (e.g. qualification certificates) and retained on the individual’s personnel file (in compliance with data protection requirements). *Note: DBS disclosures can usually only be kept for 6 months, so a record should be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained, by whom, the level of disclosure and unique reference number.*
- Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where **concerning information** emerges from any of these checks, such as:
- the DBS disclosure or barring checks show that s/he is barred from working with children;
- the candidate has provided false information
- there are serious concerns about the candidate’s suitability to work with children

an **appointment should not be made** and these should be acted upon by seeking advice from the organisation’s Human Resources service, where these exist, or other relevant local or national employment body. Where false information is provided, this may need to be reported to the Police. Where there is evidence of an allegation having been made but not dealt with in accordance with statutory allegations management procedure, advice should be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations management. Failure to follow up on such concerns may well result in the person concerned seeking employment with children elsewhere, where it is perceived that less rigorous recruitment practice is applied.
13. Induction and Supervision of Newly Appointed Staff

Newly appointed staff must not start to work with children or young people until all appropriate checks and vetting procedures have been satisfactorily completed (see Section 12). It should only be in the most exceptional circumstances where this is not the case – for example where there is a pressing need for the appointee to take up post, but one aspect of vetting has not been able to be completed for a valid and accepted reason and all other checks indicate that there is no known reason why the person is not suitable to work with children. In such a case, a risk assessment must be agreed by a senior manager within the organisation or setting and the new appointee should not have unsupervised contact with children or young people until such time as the vetting process is satisfactorily completed.

All newly appointed staff should be provided with an induction programme appropriate to the roles and responsibilities of the post and regardless of the previous experience of the new member of staff. The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide information about the organisation’s structure, policies and procedures etc
- Confirm the expectations of staff conduct
- Identify any support or training the new appointee may require to undertake and develop their new role
- Provide opportunities for the new appointee to discuss any issues, queries or concerns they may have about their role and responsibilities
- Enable the line manager or supervisor to identify and address any issues that may arise.

The programme of induction should include:

- An introduction to the organisation’s and the local area’s child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures. This should include being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of those staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities within the organisation and how any concerns, disclosures or allegations should be acted upon;
- Attendance at child protection training at a level appropriate to the appointee’s work with children and previous/most recent training experience – this should take place as soon as possible;
- Provision of information about safer working practice and clarification of the standards of behaviour and conduct expected within the organisation and for the specific role;
- Information about the organisation’s whistle-blowing policy;
- Being made aware of the disciplinary and/or capability procedures that will be applied, where necessary
- The supervision, management and performance management systems that will apply to the post, including where and from whom advice, support and expertise can be sought, particularly in relation to safeguarding matters.

It is recognised that a good induction programme following on from a robust safer recruitment process will further reduce the risk of unsuitable or inappropriate behaviours occurring in a workforce. Experience of dealing with allegations against staff has shown that employers will place themselves in a much better position to deal with unsuitable, inappropriate or abusive behaviour that may arise in the future if clear expectations of behaviour and professional boundaries are established with every new member of staff from the outset, particularly where the appointee has signed up to a code of conduct or similar and a record is kept of this on the personnel file.

Additionally, developing and maintaining a safer culture and ethos within an organisation will further safeguard children, young people and the staff that work within it.
Ongoing supervision of all staff which includes safeguarding and child protection as a standing item should be maintained within organisations that work with children. This should also feed into the individuals workforce development programme.

14. Monitoring and review
Monitoring and review of both the safer recruitment processes and induction programmes will allow for future recruitment and selection processes to be better informed and practice improved.

Additional Guidance
1. Voluntary, Community and Private Organisations
In principle, the processes described above should be operated by organisations recruiting volunteers to work with children and young people. However, it is recognised that, in some small organisations and settings, the capacity and resources to support a safer recruitment and selection procedure as described above may be limited. This does not mean that such organisations, e.g. a local community club run solely by volunteers or a small, independent playgroup etc should not apply safer recruitment standards. Rather, a common sense approach should be adopted to include as many aspects of the process as possible.

For example, it may not be possible, practical or relevant to advertise, produce an application form and set up an interview panel. It may also be the case that an individual volunteers their services, is informally recommended by another or is approached by a lead person within an organisation as s/he is considered suitable for a particular role or vacant post. In such circumstances, minimum good practice would be that, with reference to the guidance above:

- A clear message is given about the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding;
- References are sought;
- An informal face-to-face interview is conducted to gauge the individual’s aptitude and suitability;
- Appropriate checks are made – identity, qualifications (where applicable) and vetting (DBS disclosure and/ or DBS registration); and
- Child protection training is provided.
- Consideration should also be given to clarifying the parameters of the role or post, expectations of behaviour and conduct and induction and supervision arrangements.

2. Employment Agencies and Contractors
The principles in this policy and guidance should apply when employment agencies are taking people onto their books for work with children, or when contractors are recruiting staff who will work with children.

Organisations using any agencies to provide staff or volunteers should ensure that the agencies concerned use the same safer recruitment standards and apply them rigorously. Schools and further education colleges are legally required to get written confirmation that all appropriate checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. It is recommended good practice that all other organisations get similar assurances, in writing or through service level agreements, from agencies they deal with, so that they can be reassured that any staff supplied by that organisation will have been subject to the same safeguards. Similarly, when using the services of contractors to provide services for children, the contract should require the contractor to adopt and implement safer recruitment processes. Additionally, organisations should monitor agencies and contractors’ compliance with safer recruitment procedures.
3. Applicants from Overseas
Whilst DBS checks and checks against Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) records may not provide any information on applicants from overseas who have never lived in the UK, these checks will nevertheless have to be carried out to meet statutory requirements. Employers should, where possible, obtain a check of a shortlisted candidate’s criminal record from the relevant authority in the country concerned. Where the country does not supply that service, the DBS may be able to undertake some checks.

You can obtain further information about DBS checks for overseas applicants at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

It should be noted that any information from another country may have to be translated, and time and resources will need to be allocated to this. Where a criminal record check is not possible, particular care should be taken with other required checks and references. Information and advice on international vocational, professional and academic qualifications for organisations recruiting from overseas can be accessed at www.naric.org.uk

Acknowledgement: this guidance is adapted from the Harrow LSCB’s document ‘Safer Recruitment: Standards and guidance for organisations who work with children and young people 2013’.