

Staff Recruitment Guide

As part of the Statutory Framework for the Early Year's Foundation Stage, providers are required to ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so. It is a legal requirement that providers have effective recruitment systems in place, i.e. adequate qualifications and/or experience, hold a valid CRB clearance and are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (when required).

[Further information on CRB disclosures and ISA Vetting and Barring scheme can be found on Birth to Five website.](#)

This document will guide you through the process of developing an effective recruitment and selection procedure which will help you in identifying the most suitable people for your provision and those who are not.

Once a vacancy arises it is essential to plan the recruitment process by identifying who should be involved, assigning responsibilities and setting a timeline to be followed bearing in mind your outgoing member of staff may be leaving in one month.

Advertising

When preparing an advert, make sure that you include the following:

- Details of the post including post title, salary details etc.
- Aim of post.
- Relevant skills/qualifications/experience required, including CRB/ISA registration.
- Closing date and interview date.
- How to apply, and contact details.

Wording of adverts like all other related documentation should be anti-discriminatory, either directly or indirectly and if space allows should contain a statement of equal opportunity. Adverts should be inline with your Equal Opportunities policy.

Useful Advertising locations include:

- Family Information Service - free
- Job Centre Plus –free
- Local post office / shop – low cost
- Local Press / Village Magazines
- Local Radio
- National Press
- Specialised Publications
- Local job search organisations
- Local Community Groups / Centres
- Local Employment Initiatives
- Internet

Preparing Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Application Forms

Preparation and pre-planning is essential to successful recruitment. Identifying qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate and ensuring that they are made clear in the Job descriptions, person specifications and adverts will help prevent unwanted applications. As part of the advertising process, these documents should be reviewed ready for the application pack.

Job descriptions

These should clearly state:

- The main roles and responsibilities of the post including any line management responsibilities.
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children.
- Reference to an enhanced CRB disclosure check and ISA registration.(When required by the Independent Safeguarding Authority.)

Person Specification

This can be a part of the Job description but should include:

- Qualifications and Experience.
- Any other requirements needed to perform the role.
- The competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate.
- Application forms.

In accordance with Equal Opportunities, a Curriculum Vitae and covering letter will not be accepted as part of the application process. An appropriate application form will be used by all applicants. An application form should contain:

- Full personal details.
- Date of birth.
- Current address.
- National insurance number.
- ISA registration number (if applicable).
- Details of academic and vocational qualifications including awarding body and dates.
- Full employment history, including any part time and voluntary posts. Start and end dates should be given, with explanations for periods when not in employment. It is important that space is allowed for details of reasons for leaving employment.
- Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's most recent employer. It should be made clear that applications will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.
- A statement should also be included saying that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offender's Act 1974 and asking the applicant to declare any convictions whether spent or unspent.

- Anyone barred from the ISA register is committing an offence if they apply for a post in a regulated activity. The setting would need to inform ISA of this application.
- A large space should be allowed for applicant to detail his/her personal qualities and experience that are relevant to the position and how he/she meets the person specification, “why do feel you are the best person for the job”.
- If applicants are not a European Union citizen then a work permit is required, a box indicating that the applicant has a permit is needed. Permits must be checked.
- Within the application form there should be a health declaration giving details of any health issues which need to be taken into consideration although this should not have any detrimental impact on the applicant.
- The applicant should sign to say that the information detailed above is true and correct and that they are not disqualified from working with children or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body.
- It is a good idea to ask about the applicants’ current notice period or availability for work.
- Finally it is good practice to include monitoring information which is optional to fill out.

A sample of a job description and application form can be downloaded from the Birth to Five website as guidance.

Short listing for interview

All members of the selection panel (preferably 3 interviewers) should be involved in short-listing and interviewing. All should have equal status in decision making throughout. One person alone should not interview candidates and there should not be more than five on the panel.

The interview panel should apply their Equal Opportunities policy throughout the entire recruitment and selection process. It should include representation of those who will work closest with the post holder, for example, the Manager or Line Manager, a Committee Member/Owner, Children can also be included if appropriate (see section below), and any of the Early Year’s Consultants (Welfare) will support the interview process if required.

- Study all the application forms.
- Identify those which match your Person Specification, which you will have reviewed as part of the recruitment process.
- Start looking at the two most important attributes i.e. qualifications and knowledge and experience.
- As part of the short listing process you should check any qualifications on the Children Workforce Development council website: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk for appropriateness relevance to the post.
- Eliminate those not having these attributes.
- If your application form is well designed your task will not be too difficult.
- Those successful should be invited for interview, formally by letter – ensure that it is requested on the letter that they bring along to the interview their original certificates and two forms of identification including one photographic one.
- Those not successful should be informed of this. Keep their names and contact details just in case you require them at a later date, re-interviews for relief staff or other positions that may arise within your setting.

- If no applicants appear suitable re-advertise the post until you get the strong candidate your setting requires. Do not feel pressurised!

References

Ideally references should be sought on all short listed candidates including any internal applicant prior to interview, as they are part of the decision making process. In some circumstances it is not possible to obtain the reference prior to an interview either through a delay with the referee, or the candidate objecting to their current employer being approached at this stage. In these circumstances any appointment should be made subject to adequate references.

All requests for references should seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion. A reference should seek to establish, for example:

- Verification of the date of employment, title and role with employer.
- Reason for leaving their employment.
- Their suitability for caring for children: their rapport with children.
- Did they complete their duties and responsibilities satisfactorily?
- An evaluation of the applicant's ability to perform the tasks as described in the job description/person specification.
- Was the applicant punctual or any issues with absenteeism?
- Were they subject to any previous disciplinary action or involved in any ongoing disciplinary action?
- Did the applicant get along well with peers, managers and parents?
- Is there anything else that needs to be taken into consideration before employing this applicant?

References should always be sought directly from the referee, do not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate or an open reference i.e. 'To whom it may concern', as references such as these are unlikely to contain adverse comments. It is helpful to attach a copy of the job description/person specification to the request for reference letter.

Once received the reference should be scrutinised, so that issues or concerns raised can be explored further with the referee and if need be taken up with the candidate. If any questions have not been answered or they are vague, the referee should be telephoned and asked to provide more details. You should also check that information provided by the referee is consistent with that provided by the applicant.

Involving children in the process

Involving children in the selection process is becoming used more widely and is seen as good practice. Within a setting you may invite the short listed candidates into the setting to engage with the children and perhaps ask them to prepare an interactive activity which will show the level of skills and competences they have in relation to the role they are applying for. When involving children in the selection process care must be taken to consider risks and the provider should implement strategies to minimise them.

Interviews

A face to face interview should always take place even if there is only one candidate and it should assess the merits of each candidate and against the job requirements. Once shortlisted candidates should be sent a written invitation which will detail the time and location (include directions) of the interview. The letter should also ask the candidate to bring the original certificates of his/her academic and vocational training and two forms of identification. A copy of the documents used to verify the candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for their personal file and destroyed if not successful in line with Data Protection.

Pre interview you may consider:

- Organising the interviews to be held over one day, if possible.
- Arranging the interview room - take care with the heating, lighting and seating arrangements.
- Removing any obstructions from the desk and surrounding areas in order to maintain good eye contact, do you need a desk - if not, move or sit at the side.
- Having somewhere for each candidate to wait, prior to an interview.
- Ensure that there are no interruptions during the interview; it is not fair on the candidate.
- Agreeing a procedure/plan with the interviewing panel.
- Have a set of questions that are relevant to the Job description and person specification so that they assist the panel in ascertaining the suitability of the candidate for the post. – Examples of questions are available on Birth to Five service website.
- Review the application forms, ascertaining the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of those.
- Let the candidates know if there are any delays.

During the interview:

- One member of the panel should chair the interview throughout, introducing the other members of the panel to the interviewee leading and concluding the process.
- Start the interview with a short summary of the position available including hours of work and perhaps at this stage including details of wages if not included in advert and any annual leave entitlement.
- Allow an equal amount of time for each candidate. The merits of each individual should not be discussed until everyone has been interviewed.
- If there are discrepancies between the details provided on the application form and details provided by the referees, if received, ask supplementary questions.
- Give the opportunity for the applicant to ask any questions that they would like.
- Give the candidate details of any possible start date and remind them that the **position is subject to CRB, ISA registration (when required by the Independent Safeguarding Authority) , references and health declaration if applicable.**

Appointing Staff

The best candidate should be contacted first. Until the first candidate confirms, inform only those who will definitely not be offered the job. Unsuccessful candidates should be offered feedback on their interview. All offers should be subject to acceptable references and clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau and ISA Registration checks when applicable. If the first choice accepts the job let the others know immediately - if not ask the second choice candidate if there is one.

Once the successful candidate accepts the position, a letter confirming the offer subject to suitable references, satisfactory CRB (ISA registration as required) and completion of a satisfactory probationary period should be sent.

Induction

An induction should be planned for all new members of staff whether paid or voluntary. This should include an effective process to record all induction with dates and signatures. Providers should be mindful that some paperwork needs to be completed prior to any new member of staff starting employment. These include:

- CRB clearance.
- Satisfactory references.
- ISA registration checks (when required by the Independent Safeguarding Authority).
- EY2 forms sent to Ofsted (if applicable).
- Health Checks (if applicable).
- Staff personal record.

If the CRB disclosure has not been returned by the time the new employee starts work, then a written risk assessment should be undertaken detailing how the employer will ensure that the employee is adequately supervised at all times.

It is good practice to assign a mentor to any new employee to help guide them through the working practices of the setting, although any supervision will reflect the level of previous experience, qualifications and post held.

The purpose of an Induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the setting's policies and procedures, in particular Fire Safety, Safeguarding Children, Health & Safety, Confidentiality and First Aid. The Welfare Requirements state that all members of staff should have been given copies of policies and procedures as part of their induction.
- Confirm the conduct expected of Staff and Volunteers.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of Staff or Volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.
- Enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about a person's ability or suitability at the start and address them immediately.
- Identify any training needs.

- Introduction to the setting's appraisal system and book a monthly review date to fill in a staff performance plan.
- Give a copy of the staff handbook and issue the written statement of employment particulars.

An example of an Induction policy and Induction plan can be found on Birth to Five website.

When new employees start they will need to give you their P45, you will also need their bank details dependent on payment arrangements (name, branch, sort code, account number) and also their National Insurance Number. They will also need to fill in a staff information sheet, detailing, home address, emergency contact details and any medical needs.

The induction process should include regular one to ones with the new employee to confirm that he/she has settled well and to provide an opportunity to discuss any issues.

Once the probationary period has ended, the new employee should be notified of their satisfactory probationary period and permanent appointment. They will then be subject to the setting's staff appraisal system and receive regular one to ones and an annual appraisal. On some occasions it may be necessary to extend the probationary period by a further 6 months, in these circumstances providers should follow guidelines set out by ACAS.

If the probationary period has been unsuccessful and a thorough induction and support process has been implemented, a provider is able to dismiss the employee. It is important in these circumstances that the provider has followed the correct procedures with regard induction, support and training. Further support can be found at www.acas.org.uk