



Suffolk
Safeguarding
Partnership

Key Safeguarding Employment Standards

Introduction

The Key Employment Standards that follow are aimed at ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable adults, when placed in the care of others, are treated with respect, free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment. It is vitally important that all organisations that employ people to work with children and the vulnerable adopt safe recruitment and selection procedures which help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse the vulnerable. However, policies and procedures themselves are unlikely to offer the necessary levels of protection. They must be accompanied by the creation and maintenance of a safe working culture within each organisation so that every worker understands their duty of care as well as which behaviours constitute safe practice, and which should be avoided.

These standards have been developed as a minimum to be attained to assist managers to reach safer levels of recruitment, training, and the management of staff. A commitment to safeguarding is the central focus at every stage of the recruitment process from the planning stages through placing an advert (which will have a clear commitment to safeguarding prominent within it) short-listing, obtaining references, providing information for candidates, conducting the interview itself, making appropriate checks of identity and qualifications as well as undertaking appropriate vetting.

Best practice at the point of recruitment will help to dissuade some unsuitable people from accepting a post and it will also help managers to identify some unsuitable candidates. However, thorough, and careful recruitment procedures consistently applied will not completely eliminate the risk of appointing an abuser who is determined to gain employment which will give them access to children, young people and the vulnerable. It is imperative, that each organisation develops a respectful and open culture which is committed to safeguarding and which promotes the welfare of those for whom it cares. The foundation of such a safe working environment is based on the development of clear, safe policies and procedures which make explicit the practice all employees are expected to adhere to. These are demonstrably embedded in daily practice and all employees see the policies as 'living and breathing' within each workplace.

The Key Standards

1. Recruitment

Information for managers provides:

- Comprehensive recruitment policies which have embedded within them clear information about how to focus on safeguarding throughout recruitment and selection processes.
- Clear flagging of posts within an organisation when it has been agreed that such posts will require a Value Based [Warner] interview. (see Appendix A for further information)
- Specific guidance about Value Based [Warner] interviewing for those posts which require this form of interviewing.
- Clear policies exist which set out the disciplinary consequences for recruiting managers for non-compliance with safer recruitment policy.

Advertisements

- All advertisements include a statement which confirms the organisation's commitment to Safeguarding and safer employment.

Application forms

- Application forms include a specific question as to whether the applicant has been subject to any investigation or complaint.

2. Interviewing

- Recruitment panels contain a minimum of two interviewers, at least one of whom has received specific training in safer recruitment and is aware of the safeguarding agenda.
- Interviews are face to face even if there is only one candidate.
- Notes are made and retained of candidates' responses to questions posed at interview.
- Interviews explore issues relating to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, for example they:
 - Investigate any apparent sizeable gaps in employment to check for credible reasons.
 - Explore concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee.
 - Ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a Criminal Records check.
 - Ask probing questions about the capacity of an applicant to safeguard and protect the welfare of the vulnerable clients in his/her care.
 - Make use of Value Based [Warner] interview questions when selecting staff who will work with vulnerable children, young people, and adults (See Appendix A for further information about these interviews).

3. References

- References are sought directly from the referee.
- Open-ended, 'to whom it may concern' references are *never* accepted.
- Written references are subject to verification of the identity of the author and for this reason are always followed up verbally.
- Any anomalies or discrepancies between the information that the referee has provided and the information that the applicant has provided, or where further clarification is required, is sought in a verbal conversation (usually by telephone) between the recruiting manager and the referee. Notes are made and kept of such conversations.
- When employing agency staff references are checked by contacting the candidate's last place of employment.
- In particular, referees are asked specific questions in relation to the following:
 - The referee's perception of the individual's suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
 - Whether they have any concerns about the candidate working with the particular client group.
 - Whether they have any knowledge of the individual being personally investigated over safeguarding issues, but which may have come to nothing.
 - Whether the individual has ever been disciplined for concerns relating to his/her conduct with vulnerable clients.

4. Employment Checks

- When undertaking employment checks, proof of identification is obtained by referring to appropriate documentation. This is restricted to the scrutiny of original copies of either birth certificates, passports, driving licences or naturalisation certificates. No other documents are acceptable.
- No-one starting work or moving into a post which is designated as a Regulated Activity [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Freedoms Act 2012] is allowed to start without a check being made against the Barred lists. This will usually be obtained via an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records check. Quick check systems are in place for those working in schools and for adult social care.
- No newly appointed employee is permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults without supervision unless there is documented evidence of a clear check and a documented risk assessment undertaken and approved by an authorised manager.
- No employee is permitted to start work without a satisfactory criminal record check unless there is documented evidence of a check against the Barred lists and a risk assessment undertaken and approved by an authorised manager. In such circumstances the worker must work under supervision at all times.
- In cases where information is received on the criminal records check but where the manager nevertheless wishes to appoint, there must be a clear, recorded risk assessment approved by a senior manager.

- Failure to receive an outcome from a checking process is rigorously pursued and the employee's position is reviewed at regular intervals.

5. Post-employment

- Induction and probationary periods for employees are thoroughly utilised to develop employee understanding and grounding in the safeguarding policies, ethos and culture.
- Clarity in relation to what constitutes safe working practices with the vulnerable client group is provided.
- Both the newly appointed worker and his/her line manager make a signed record that this part of the induction process has been completed satisfactorily. The record is kept on file.
- During this stage of employment, the employee works under supervision on a regular basis.
- The worker is offered support with professional issues at regular 1:1 meetings with his/her line manager.

6. Training

- Training to facilitate a sound understanding of key guidance and practices about safeguarding and child protection is mandatory, updated regularly and embedded in performance management systems.
- Additional training with a specific focus on safer recruitment is undertaken by those who recruit staff and is regularly updated.
- All relevant managers are accountable for evidencing that such training for themselves and their staff has been undertaken.
- Relevant training is mandatory for employees who do not have direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, but who do have access to information systems containing the details of these client groups.
- Those individuals who undertake Value Based or Warner interviews have received the appropriate training to enable them to do so.
- All training is kept up to date.

7. Safe Working Culture

- A positive obligation for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is placed overtly on all employees.
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults' needs are paramount, they are listened to and any concerns in relation to their welfare are acted upon promptly.
- All employees are monitored by their line managers both in the probationary period and beyond to ensure that all staff comply with expected behaviours and attitudes that constitute best practice within individual agencies in relation to safeguarding.
- Such monitoring is evidenced through performance management and professional development arrangements such as training and appraisal systems.

8. Whistle-blowing and Complaints

- A rigorous whistle-blowing policy is in place to ensure that all concerns about staff conduct are reported and acted upon in a fair and timely manner.
- There is evidence that the whistle-blowing procedure is being used appropriately to improve outcomes.
- An accessible complaints procedure is in place for service users to raise concerns.
- There is evidence that complaints are fully investigated and recorded accurately.

9. Policies and Procedures

- Managers are responsible for ensuring that all Human Resources and safe employment policies, procedures and practices are adhered to during the recruitment selection and training of staff.
- All staff are provided with clear codes of conduct/safe working practice guidelines.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures in line with Human Resources policy are applied where safeguarding measures are not strictly adhered to.

10. Monitoring Systems

Monitoring systems and quality assurance are embedded to ensure that policy is followed through into practice.

- Formal audits of sufficient quality and quantity are conducted regularly, allowing ample time for improvements to be made post audit, with results recorded and reported effectively.
- Managers monitor the day-to-day work environment.
- Employees demonstrate their commitment to providing a protective environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. For example, they monitor the supervision of children, young people and vulnerable adults and demonstrate good practice in relation to physical contact with children and vulnerable groups.
- There are clear, appropriate and rigorously enforced policies and procedures in place concerning the transportation of children, young people and vulnerable adults, ensuring that safeguarding principles are strictly adhered to.
- Service providers who supply drivers for the transportation of these client groups are under contractual obligation to provide drivers and escorts that are appropriately vetted, e.g., DBS checked
- Guidance on safe working practices (See Appendix C for examples) is provided for each member of staff and includes clarity in relation to such areas as:
 - Non-routine events, such as school trips
 - Child injury/illness
 - Internet use
 - The use, supervision and handling of text and photographic media.

Appendix A: Personal Interviewing (also known as Warner Interviewing)

Personal interviews, also known as Warner interviews, have typically been used, alongside the formal interview, in residential social care settings. The mandate for this type of interview came from 'Choosing with Care: The report of the Committee of Inquiry into Selection, Development and Management of Staff in Children's Homes' (Warner, 1992).

Warner recommended that employers should undertake a 'preliminary interview' to ask questions that would probe candidates about their personal life, attitudes and motivations, in order to establish a fuller picture of the character of the applicant, and their suitability to work with the client group. For example, questions may focus around attitudes to control and punishment of children and the stability of the candidates' emotional and sexual relationships. The questions are asked at a pre-interview session on a one-to-one basis with the interviewer and the candidate. An additional person (usually an HR adviser) should also be present so that responses of the candidates can be fully recorded. Such interviews require considerable skills on the part of the interviewer. Careful training in the use of appropriate questions and techniques used during the interview is essential.

HR advisers in each organisation will be able to offer specific advice and support in relation to personal interviewing.

Appendix B

Risk Assessment for employees for whom a valid DBS has not been received at the time s/he is due to commence duties
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This form is **only** for use in exceptional cases to request an exemption from the requirement to obtain a valid DBS certificate prior to appointing a member of staff to work with children. It should not be used as an alternative to submitting DBS forms at the earliest possible date. This form must be retained on the employee's personal file indefinitely.

Post to be filled	
Date post became/becomes vacant	
Alternative arrangements for covering post if employee does not commence duties	
Date of interview	
Date DBS form submitted to personnel provider	
Has provider been asked to enquire on progress if more than 2 months have elapsed?	
Level of disclosure sought	
Name of current/last employer	
Length of service with current/last employer	
Has there been a break in employment since last employer?	
Has this been satisfactorily explained by employee?	
Has advice been sought from the Head of HR if there are any concerns about the employee's background?	

Please complete Line Manager's/Headteacher's declaration overleaf.

Line Manager's/Headteacher's Declaration:

- I confirm that this post is essential to the organisation's/school's operation.
- I confirm that I have obtained references from at least one referee with recent and relevant knowledge of the employee. I am satisfied that the referee has no reservations as to the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.
- I confirm that an appropriate check has been carried out against the children/adults barred list and written confirmation received of satisfactory outcome.
- I confirm that medical clearance has been given for this appointment.
- I confirm that I will ensure appropriate levels of supervision and/or monitoring will be maintained at all times (for example, unplanned visits by senior staff to employee's work area and avoiding the person working alone with individual children).
- I confirm that the employee will not be given responsibility for high-risk activities e.g. residential trips until appropriate DBS disclosure arrives.
- I confirm that the established child protection procedures, standards, and ethos of this organisation/school provide clear expectations of all staff in matters of child protection.
- I confirm that as part of the employee's induction, the above standards and expectations will be made clear.
- I have discussed the details of this appointment and assessed the potential risk(s) with my Authorised Manager/Chair of Governors.

Signed:	Name:
Job Title:	School:
Date:	

Decision:	
Exemption endorsed/not endorsed	<i>(please delete as appropriate)</i>
Signed:	Date:
Authorised Manager/Chair of Governors	