

what is...

B3SDA

BURY THIRD SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Safe recruitment for children and young people's organisations ?

Factsheet 7
Sept 09

overview

Whatever activities your organisation is providing for children or young people, you will want to ensure that you have the best people for the job. Children need adults who are skilled, communicate effectively and are committed to their safety and welfare.

One of the most proactive risk management strategies organisations can use is to be very selective in the recruitment and selection of paid staff and volunteers. People who wish to harm children or young people will target organisations that are unaware of the risks and impacts of child abuse and neglect, who conduct little or no screening of new workers.

Finding and recruiting the right people can often be difficult, so we have outlined below some effective 'safe recruitment' processes that will help you to attract the right staff and volunteers to work with your organisation.

a checklist

The following tasks are essential when recruiting paid staff but also valuable when recruiting volunteers, because you still need to ensure that you recruit the right person with the right skills to do the tasks involved. Although perhaps more informal in certain parts, an effective volunteer recruitment process is still essential to maintain the safety and welfare of children and young people you may be in contact with.

1. 'SAFE' ADVERTISING
2. JOB DESCRIPTION
3. PERSON SPECIFICATION
4. APPLICATION FORM
5. INTERVIEW
6. CRB DISCLOSURE CHECKS
7. REFERENCES
8. INDUCTION PROCESS
9. ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES

1) 'SAFE' ADVERTISING

When advertising for a new post, make sure you include a message about your organisation's commitment to maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. This may be a statement about your child protection policy, making reference to your code of conduct or induction process.

The advertisement could also include a statement that reference checking will be undertaken and a CRB disclosure check required where appropriate.

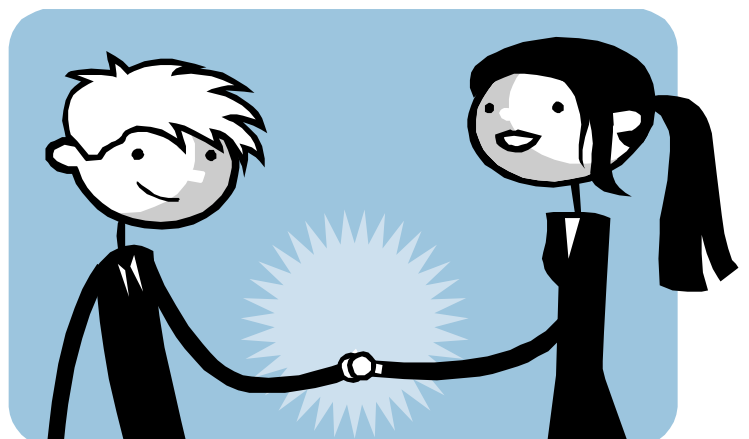
2) JOB DESCRIPTION

This is about what tasks the applicant will do ('role description' for volunteer posts). It should include:

- Job or role title and the overall purpose;
- The main responsibilities and key tasks;
- Who they will be responsible to;
- Details of availability of training / induction;
- *(If paid work)* Information about hours of work, salary, entitlements and other benefits.

3) PERSON SPECIFICATION

This is about what skills the applicant will be expected to have for the job or role. It details the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes which are needed to the job. They Could be divided into what is essential and what is desirable to assist the individual with their application.



4) APPLICATION FORM

A good application form assesses the candidate's suitability for the role, making it easier to compare them with others and also get all of the important details you need to ask. For this reason, CVs should not be used.

Depending on the nature of your organisation, you can send out application forms beforehand or the interviewer can complete it during the interview. The application form should be simple, easy to read and understand. A volunteer application form should be less formal and more concerned with experience and skills rather than education and employment history.

5) INTERVIEW

It is important to have a face-to-face interview with pre-planned and clear questions ready. Using an interview process helps to explore a person's approach and perceptions about working with children.

The interview should relate to the job/role description and the person specification. It is about making sure you find someone who suits the job and also ensures the job suits the candidate.

Use open-ended questions (requiring more than a yes or no answer) which help you gain insight into the applicant's values and attitudes. Watch for warning signs which may include evasive answers to questions.

6) CRB DISCLOSURE CHECKS

You must make people aware right from the start that the post is subject to a **CRB** disclosure and who within the organisation will have access to that information. This applies to both paid and volunteer posts. You must make it clear at what stage in the interview process a disclosure will be sought.

CRB stands for the Criminal Records Bureau, the organisation which handles all criminal record checks. There are 2 levels of checks available, but from October 2009 all those involved in regulated activity with children and young people will need an '**enhanced**' check.

It is important to note that CRB disclosures are used to check if someone has a criminal record. It is *one* way of reducing the risk of recruiting new staff or volunteers who may be unsuitable to work with children or young people. However it is not foolproof. For example 90% of child sex offenders have no relevant criminal record. CRB disclosures must be part of an effective recruitment

* For a definition of 'regulated activity' see 'What is ...?' **Factsheet 6**



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policy, training and supervision of workers and a system for anyone to raise concerns about an individual.

As an employee, the CRB charges £36 for an enhanced disclosure, although this charge is waived for volunteers. Disclosures can only be issued to CRB registered organisations. For smaller organisations, checks need to be done through an 'umbrella body' for an admin fee.

The disclosure certificate is dated but there is no 'expiry' date specified. CRB says it is up to each organisation to decide when to renew a disclosure, although it is generally recommended to be updated every 3 years.

7) REFERENCES

On the application form it should request details for 2 references that can be called upon as good practice. After the interview, if the applicant is successful, these should be collected. Sometimes applicants can even be asked to bring these to the interview. Reference should indicate the person's suitability to work with children.

Prior to starting paid work ask the candidate to bring to the interview evidence of relevant qualifications gained.

8) INDUCTION PROCESS

A good way of getting things started is with an induction session to introduce the worker or volunteer to the organisation. Not only does it give opportunity for the new person to ask questions and clarify their role, but it also provides a platform to introduce your organisational background and aims. There should also be a clear explanation of support and supervision structure, with a designated line manager to report to.

Where necessary, training should also be provided which will help the individual fulfil the role.

9) ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES

Where possible, a staff handbook should be given at induction containing relevant policies & procedures about safeguarding children. These may include:

- Child Protection Policy / Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy / Procedures
- Employee and Volunteer Code of Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities

It is also essential that relevant insurance cover is arranged to cover employees and volunteers. **NOTE:** Volunteers are not automatically considered as a 'third party' for purposes of your Public Liability insurance so there is a need to specifically refer to it in your policy.

This factsheet is for information only and not to be used for definitive guidance. For further help please use this excellent resource:

www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/recruitment/general/recruitment