



This policy was updated and approved by the trustees of the Charity on 24 November 2021, and for each subsequent calendar year should be reviewed and updated by the year end. The previous version was approved on 17 February 2021.

The goal of this policy is to ensure that the charity follows good practice in recruitment of volunteers and staff. In particular it documents requirements to minimise the risks of recruiting anyone who is not suitable to work with children.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy which details requirements on all volunteers and staff in connection with safeguarding.

Overview of recruitment process

Each role should be defined in writing and approved by the board of trustees.

Every role should be advertised widely, including stating that identification and references will be required with some references being followed up by telephone, and also stating where the role will require a DBS check.

For all roles, the applicant should be asked to supply name, address, email, and telephone number before proceeding to interview.

For trustee and staff roles, the applicant should supply a CV and brief covering letter as part of the process. Before recruiting these roles, the trustees should agree the recruitment process to be followed, and should define objective criteria which will be used to select the successful candidate.

Each candidate should be interviewed face-to-face; this may be done as a video call. Interviewers should be trustees or volunteers or staff members delegated by the trustees.

Each interview with a candidate should include a list of standard questions for that role, and each of the replies to these should be documented. Where the candidate meets the criteria for the role but the interview raises issues, the interviewer should document this and escalate to a trustee. Where there is a single interviewer, a trustee or a volunteer or staff member delegated by the trustees should review the interview notes to decide whether to offer the position.

Where we offer a position, the offer must be subject to supply of:

- Copies of two items of identification, one including a photo, a second including an address. These can be supplied as emailed PDF or JPG files.
- Two references using our standard template from people who have known the candidate for over 2 years and are not related to her or him. (In-school Volunteers recruited by a partner school from their parent community need only one reference, as we consider the school to be a second referee.)
- For In-school Volunteers we require our partner school to make a DBS check
- For trustees and staff, and for any volunteer role involving one-to-one contact with children we require a DBS with barred list check and we will do this ourselves. (The Charity Commission recommends DBS checks for trustees, and our evaluation is that it would be inappropriate for a charity working with children to employ staff who do not have a DBS certificate.)

- For other volunteers, we do not require a DBS certificate.
- For staff, all other checks necessary under statute such as proof of their National Insurance Number and of the right to work in the UK.
- Signed copies of policy documents in force and stating that they need to be signed by volunteers and/or staff. (Staff can read and sign these in their first 5 working days.) Currently these are:
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Confidentiality Agreement
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - For volunteers, General Volunteer Agreement or In-School Volunteer Agreement
- Where the person is to receive a Number Champions email address, they need to first sign the Email Policy.

The photo identification should be checked by the person conducting the face-to-face interview or by someone else who has met the candidate and is a Number Champions trustee or a volunteer or staff member designated by the trustees for this purpose.

A trustee or a volunteer or staff member designated by the trustees should make the following checks on ID, references, and policies:

- That the photo ID has the photo and correct name of the candidate and appears to be a genuine current document issued by an authoritative source. Where this is not a passport or driving license, or where there is any doubt, this should be checked with a trustee and as necessary investigated.
- The address document appears to be a genuine recent document issued by an authoritative source and has the same name as the photo document. Where there is any doubt, this should be escalated to a trustee and as necessary investigated.
- The references are as per our template and are satisfactory and that the name and address matches the address document. If there is any doubt, the person checking should phone the referee and ask for clarification, and should make a note of the conversation.
- That policy signature pages are received duly signed and dated.

The name of the person making each check should be recorded.

Copies of all underlying documents should be stored on the designated drives.

A trustee should be designated to ensure that at least 5% of references for volunteers and all references for trustees and staff are followed up by telephone by a trustee or by a volunteer or staff member designated by the trustees, and a note made. Where the follow up is unsatisfactory, this should be escalated to a trustee for action.

Training and induction

For each role, there should be a plan for initial training and induction. A trustee or a staff member or volunteer designated by the trustees should be responsible. This should include:

- Scheduling training
- Checking that the person has completed training
- Recording this on the database
- Scheduling induction, which may involve pairing the volunteer or staff member with an existing volunteer or staff member who will take responsibility for the induction.
- Reviewing the induction with the new volunteer or staff member at the end of a scheduled period and confirming that the person is now up to speed with the role.

The responsible person should record that each of these activities has happened, giving the date and their own name as checker.

Appendix – not part of policy. NSPPC information on “Safer recruitment”

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment#heading-top>

What is safer recruitment?

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure your staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

Recruitment should be a continuing process of improvement for every school, club, business or organisation whose work or services involve contact with children.

> [Read our practice example about working with parent volunteers](#)

The steps on this page will help you set up and review your organisation's safe recruitment processes.

What is a safer recruitment policy statement?

A safer recruitment policy statement is a vital part of your overarching safeguarding policies and procedures. It sets out your organisation's commitment to recruiting staff and volunteers who are suitable to work with children.

It sends a clear message to staff, volunteers and potential applicants that your organisation prioritises the safety and welfare of children.

What to include

Your safer recruitment policy statement should set out your organisation's commitment to:

- safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices
- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people
- responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
- a list of the supporting procedures that accompany the policy
- the date the policy comes into force and when you will review it.

Your safer recruitment policy statement should work alongside other policies within your organisation, for example your equal opportunities policy. It should sit under a wider [safeguarding policy statement](#).

Aim to keep your policy statement under two sides of A4 paper. You could consider incorporating safer recruitment statements into existing policies on recruitment, selection and induction.

Safer recruitment procedures

Having a safer recruitment policy statement in place is a vital first step towards keeping the children and young people who have contact with your staff and volunteers safe. But it's also important to establish clear written procedures and make sure everyone who is involved with any form of recruitment knows how to follow them.

These will ensure that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process.

Plan the recruitment process

Plan the whole of your recruitment process in advance to make sure you have a consistent approach every time you recruit a new staff member or volunteer.

Taking a planned and structured approach will help:

- minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- ensure you select the right person for the role
- make sure the process is fair
- make sure there are records of the process for future reference.

Following a written procedure also means you're less likely to miss anything out and that each time you recruit you're adhering to legislation and guidance.

Think about the resources that you'll need and how you are going to make them available.

This includes making sure enough people will be available to help conduct the interviews.

Define the role

For any role working with children and young people, both the role description and the person specification should highlight the safeguarding responsibilities.

Advertising the role

The advertisement is your first opportunity to send out a clear safeguarding message. Every advert for a role that includes work with children should include a statement about your commitment to keeping children safe.

If the role requires a criminal records check, this should be included in the advert.

You should advertise all vacancies to attract a wide selection of applicants – whether the role is for paid staff or a volunteer.

Applicant information pack

Providing an application pack ensures that people interested in applying for a role have all the information they need about your organisation and the advertised vacancy. It's best practice to use a standard application form for all roles, whether paid or unpaid. This helps make sure you get all the information you need from each candidate. It should include space for the candidate to explain how they meet the criteria outlined in the person specification.

You should include an overview of your safer recruitment process so that candidates understand what information will be sought from them and why, and what will be expected of them at each stage of the process.

Self-disclosure form

A self-disclosure form gives candidates the opportunity to tell you confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record.

You can only ask for the information you are entitled to know about as a potential employer. What you can ask will depend on the role they will be doing. For more information about this, see our legislation and guidance section.

Applicants should complete a self-disclosure form before the interview and bring it in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'. You should only open the self-disclosure forms of candidates who have been selected for the role, and review the information inside as part of your vetting checks, applying a risk assessment process if information has been disclosed. You can find more information about risk assessments in the What to do if vetting checks raise concerns tab.

You must securely dispose of all unopened self-disclosure forms.

The self-disclosure form does not replace the need for a criminal records check. Criminal records checks should always be carried out as appropriate to the role.

[> See our example self-disclosure forms](#)

References

You should ask applicants to provide the details of at least two referees and check references as part of your [vetting checks](#).

It's a good idea to give candidates an overview of the questions you'll be asking referees, so the candidate can consent to this information being provided. Make sure you ask about the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.

It's best practice to use a standard reference form for all roles, to make sure you get all the information you need.

Selecting applicants for interview

Shortlisting should be carried out by at least two people. They should each be clear about what their role involves, and should assess each application form according to how well it meets the criteria set out in the person specification.

Preparing for interview

You should assess all applicants on their ability to carry out the role, based on justifiable and objective criteria. Plan a range of selection methods that are clearly related to the person specification.

Panel

At least two people should be on the interview panel and you should have a chair.

Agree beforehand who is responsible for ensuring all assessments are conducted fairly and candidates are treated equally.

Children's participation

Involving children, young people and their families in recruitment can be a really useful way of finding the right people for the role.

Practical test

A question and answer format may not be the best way to test a particular requirement or competency. You may want to consider other methods such as a practical test.

Interview

Interviews to recruit people to work with children should always be conducted face-to-face.

Ask candidates in advance whether they have any access requirements for the interview venue, and provide what they need. Give an outline of the selection methods you'll be using and ask if they need any special arrangements for these.

Plan your questions in advance. Choose questions that relate to items in the person specification and enable you to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children, their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role.

You should ask each candidate the same questions so that they are all treated equally.

Make notes during the interview. This will form the evidence for assessing each candidate after the interviews are complete. Use a scoring system based on the person specification and follow the same criteria for each candidate.

It's best practice to use value based interviewing techniques, which will help you focus on each candidate's values and behaviours (Erooga, 2009).

During the interview candidates should show that they are able to:

- establish and maintain professional boundaries and professional integrity
- establish and maintain relationships with children
- take action to protect a child.

Checking identity

Check each candidate's identity during the recruitment process. The first opportunity to do this is usually when the candidate attends an assessment day and interview.

[> Find out more about the checks you need to complete before taking on a new member of staff or volunteer](#)

Making an offer

When you contact the successful candidate, make it clear that the offer is still subject to satisfactory completion of all the vetting processes you need to undertake.