

## Checklist - Safer Selection

### **The application form:**

- Is designed (or customised) for work with children or adults
- Asks for full employment history, including part-time to nearest month, including gaps, since leaving full-time education (Chair to probe gaps at interview)
- Asks about any family relationship with existing employees or employers
- Asks for any other name the applicant has been known by
- Asks whether the candidate is a barred person under DBA requirements

### **The person specification listing the required personal characteristics:**

- Is devised by someone suitably knowledgeable or trained in selection
- Together with the job description, identifies duty of care / safeguarding requirements, including whether the post is in a regulated activity
- Identifies an enhanced DBS check is necessary; will include a request to undertake appropriate checks under the Children's Barred List and Adults Barred List
- Is sufficiently configured to fully test the suitability of candidates
- Indicates how the requirements will be tested during the selection process (e.g. group exercises, personality questionnaire, child abuse inventory, observed discussions)

### **Rigorous recruitment processes:**

- Gaps in employment history / study are checked by interview panels
- Panel chairs take responsibility to identify referees to be approached
- Panel chairs 'sign off' appointment before a binding contract is formed
- Offers not appointments are 'made subject to'
- Verification of overseas workers suitability: qualifications, criminal records etc.
- Based on the Business Managers' Handbook and Department for Education guidelines on recruitment and selection

### **Recruitment processes are as rigorous for:**

- Internal transfers to work with children and vulnerable people, including Agency, interims, consultants, volunteers or temporary staff

### **Rigorous screening of non-staff personnel with unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults e.g.:**

- Volunteers; escort / and transport agencies
- Students on placement
- Consultants
- Contractors

### **Agency, bank, consultants, interim or temporary staff:**

- Are not used 'frequently or for long periods'. The benefits of permanency should be promoted
- Agency staff are always engaged through Comensura with a safeguarding flag. The agency will need to confirm in writing that it has undertaken the necessary pre employment checks: identity check, rights to work, references,

medical, DBS & related checks under the Children's Barred List and Adults Barred List, right to work, qualification etc

- Understand their responsibilities in line with the code of conduct
- Understand the need to inform the agency of any convictions or investigations before and during the engagement with the Council
- Know how to whistle blow / highlight concerns about children / vulnerable adults

## Checklist - Safer Selection - Information for applicants

### Applicants are advised that:

- They will be asked whether they are a barred person as per the DBS requirements.
- The Council reserves right to approach current and any previous employer
- The Council has a policy on the recruitment of ex offenders
- The Council has an offender aware culture and operates rigorous screening processes
- Current and previous employers will be asked about disciplinary offences, including expired offences
- The post is exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and they will be required to declare all convictions with dates. Explanations will be sought and some convictions will debar employment.
- A Disclosure and Barring check will be made and further DBS checks may be carried out as and when required during employment
- Providing false information makes them liable to summary dismissal
- Failure to declare conviction, caution or pending police action disqualifies them from employment
- They will participate in group exercises, written exercises etc – where selection process determines
- Young people in care will meet them and give their views on applicants – where selection process determines
- Personal interviews will explore candidate's attitudes
- Appointments are not made 'subject to references' or before DBS checks
- Social Worker contracts are conditional upon (continuing) registration with the HCPC.
- Social Care Workers meeting the standards defined by the Social Work Reform Board
- Employment does not start until the Appointing Manager signs off that all checks have been made and cleared

## Checklist - Safer Selection References and Checks

### Employer referees are:

- Sent a standard pro forma (can be customised with extra questions for specific jobs to address criteria as defined in person specification)
- Sent job description and person specification for the role
- Asked to comment on applicant's weaknesses / strengths in relation to needs of post
- Asked about performance history and absence record
- Asked about disciplinary offences, including expired offences
- Advised about their legal liability for references, that reference should contain no material misstatement or omission

### References are:

- Verified for their provenance
- Followed up by phone calls where Appointing Manager determines a gap exists. A written record is made and retained
- Sought for internal candidates
- Followed up, read and 'signed off' by Appointing Manager

### Checks are made:

- To verify identity of the applicant through birth certificate or passport
- To verify education qualifications
- To verify professional qualifications
- To verify professional registration with appropriate body
- With police records (DBS check)
- Against the DBS Children's Barred List and Adults' Barred List
- Comparing employment and superannuation records
- Appointment of applicant with prior criminal record is decided by the relevant Director following HR advice.

## Questions to ask yourself at different stages

### **DBS disclosures**

Nature of offence?

Is it spent (as per Rehab. of Offender definitions)?

Age at which offences committed – time since last offence?

Number and Frequency of offending?

Would the offence influence their work with the client group?

Attitude to offending?

Consider attitudes to control, punishment

Consider references – is the person viewed as honest? May seek further references

Appointing manager to undertake a risk assessment

Generally:

Any offences against persons – NOT appointable

Schedule 1 offence – NOT appointable

### **Medical**

Trigger: more than 10 days+ (not pregnancy or disability related);

Appointing Manager to be prompted for proper consideration of all relevant factors

Look at past record of sickness

Explore reasons with the candidate

Check reference regarding historical sickness

Occupational Health advice sought; send all known information

Full medical should be considered

Panel must consider issues of disability and job design to ensure no unlawful discrimination

### **Gaps in Employment**

Be sceptical, may be indicator of other things – disciplines, dismissal, offending, and lack of commitment, health issues.

Must be explored in depth.

Consider seeking further references for verification

Ask direct questions e.g.

*Were you sacked?*

*Did you have more than one job during the period you have listed as employed?*

*Where were you during the period not accounted for in your employment record etc?*

*Do you have references to cover gaps?*

*Do you have a passport stamp to show you were travelling?*

Verbal comments from referee must be recorded and included in feedback to appointing manager

### **Formal Interview – Additional Tips**

The formal interview may indicate areas of weakness or inconsistency - Consider 2nd interview

High score in tests, low score in interview. Why? For example: weaknesses in equal opportunities: say attitudes to certain offences / certain groups in society must be rigorously explored

Agree model answers in advance of the interview

Do not ask closed or leading questions but ensure candidates get a good opportunity to expand answers

Where possible use competency guides to frame questions which will identify both desired and non-desired responses / characteristics

Is the candidate able to discuss personal issues including probing questions of an intimate nature, which they may be exploring with clients, if not is their explanation in keeping with the job requirements?

Record panel prompts

### **Integrating Assessment Centre Scores**

Must be considered alongside other information not alone

A grid containing assessment scores, application details and scores from interview must be completed

Ensure all panels are uniform in their approach

Check consistency of result; e.g. Literacy – good application, poor score in test – did they complete their own form?

Wherever possible a practical test must be employed

### **References – Questions**

Look for unsubstantiated or non-qualified statements i.e. listings of tasks. If it does not say how well they have done, ask referee

Did the named / correct person provide the reference – are they authorised?

Check sickness, disciplines, negative or neutral statements

What is the statement about convictions? / DBS check

Check have they actually worked in capacity stated; make sure this is explicit

Do not ignore any clues. Cross reference with application form and stated experience

Check where someone says 'I worked for Camp America', it was not in an administrative capacity

Can the agency verify positive testimonials from placements?

Be wary of post box addresses and always get a reference from their last employer.

Be wary of career changes. Be wary of long periods of travel

Telephone or write for additional information if what you have is not adequate

Headed paper? Is it an 'agreed' reference?

### **Risk assessment / decision**

Ensure all possible information is compiled and mandatory checks have been undertaken

Where concerns arise, do not give 'benefit of doubt'

Seek further information / references where this may lead to a better informed judgement (not a delaying tactic)

Seek specialist advice if in doubt; consider whether adjustments are feasible during a trial period

Any arrangements must be temporary whilst further information obtained

Clear any contentious issues (e.g. DBS) up the line

New learning must be coordinated and shared by the HR Sub Group to all stakeholders

## Agency Worker (general rules) – Strengthening Safeguards through Regulations

Agencies have responsibility under the Disclosure and Barring scheme to;

- Undertake checks on whether a worker is barred,
- To notify the DBS of any disciplinary issues or other matters of concern that may be relevant for consideration under the Children’s Barred List or Adults Barred List and

### Checking workers’ credentials

Where a worker is:

- Required by law or a professional body to have any qualifications or authorisation to work in the relevant job; or
- Will be working with or caring for one or more under-18 year-olds;

or

- Will be working in a job caring for or attending someone in need of care or attention (by reason of age, infirmity or any other circumstances),

then the agency or business must also;

- Obtain copies of any relevant qualifications or authorisations and provide copies for the hiring agency;
- Obtain two references from non-relatives and provide copies for the hiring agency; and
- Take all other reasonably practicable steps to confirm that the worker is not unsuitable for the job.

If an agency or business has taken all reasonable steps to fulfil these requirements but has been unable to do so fully, it must inform the hirer of those facts and tell them what steps have been taken.

### Acting on information obtained

Where an employment business (agency) receives or obtains information that gives it reasonable grounds to believe that the worker is unsuitable for the job he or she is doing, it must without delay inform the hirer and end the placement.

If an agency receives information that indicates the worker’s unsuitability, but there are no reasonable grounds to believe this is correct, it must still inform the hirer of the information received.

However, the agency must then make reasonable enquiries as to the worker’s suitability and inform the hirer of any information it receives or obtains. If the enquiries give reasonable grounds for believing the information received, then the hirer must be informed and the placement ended.

**Note:** Agencies supplying **nurses and some care workers** are subject to additional special rules introduced by the Care Standards Act 2002: the Nurses Agencies Regulations 2002 and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002. Managers in those services need to take account of the requirements of those pieces of statute in the employment of such staff.

**For Southwark Council, all agency staff assignments must be made via Comensura who undertake standard protocols for the Council and ensure appropriate checks and clearances are obtained and that documentary evidence is available before placements occur. Any exceptions to this require a clear risk assessment to be undertaken and cleared by a responsible manager prior to assignment (including restrictions on activity pending further clearances).**

**NEW STARTER CHECKLIST (INFORMATION OBTAINED TO BE  
RETAINED ON PERSONAL FILE)**

NAME
JOB TITLE
PAYROLL NUMBER
RESPONSIBLE MAAGER

<b>RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
APPLICATION FORM		
CHECKED – BARRED PERSON (DBS) (regulated posts only)		
DBS REGISTRATION (As applicable)		
GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT COVERED		
JOB DESCRIPTION		
PERSON SPECIFICATION		
COPY OF ADVERT		
INTERVIEW LETTER		
OCCUPATIONAL TESTING RESULTS		
2 <sup>nd</sup> INTERVIEW (IF APPLICABLE)		
INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT		
INTERVIEW DECISION (AUTHORITY TO APPOINT)		
BUSINESS CASE FOR SALARY (WHERE APPLICABLE)		

<b>STARTER CHECKLIST</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Date</b>
OFFER LETTER				
JOB ACCEPTANCE				
REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS				
DBS CHECK / DBS BARRED LISTS CHECK (REFERENCE NUMBER RECORDED)				
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLEARANCE				
REFERENCE 1 MANAGER TO INITIAL ORIGINAL				
REFERENCE 2 MANAGER TO INITIAL ORIGINAL				
REFERENCE 3 (IF REQUIRED)				
IDENTITY CHECKED (COPY TO FILE)				
RIGHT TO WORK in UK CHECKED (COPY TO FILE)				
ORIGINAL QUALIFICATIONS SEEN (COPY TO FILE)				
PROF.REGISTRATION VERIFIED (COPY TO FILE)				
SAP INPUT OF PROF.REGISTRATION				

<b>Checks and sign-off</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
DECLARED CONVICTIONS; SIGN OFF		
MANAGER SIGN OFF OF ALL REFS		
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER SIGN OFF OF		

ALL CLEARANCES (BEFORE START DATE AGREED)		
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER RISK ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN		
START DATE AGREED		
CONTRACT ISSUED		
INDUCTION BOOKED		