

# Recruiting safely guidance for children workforce in Warwickshire

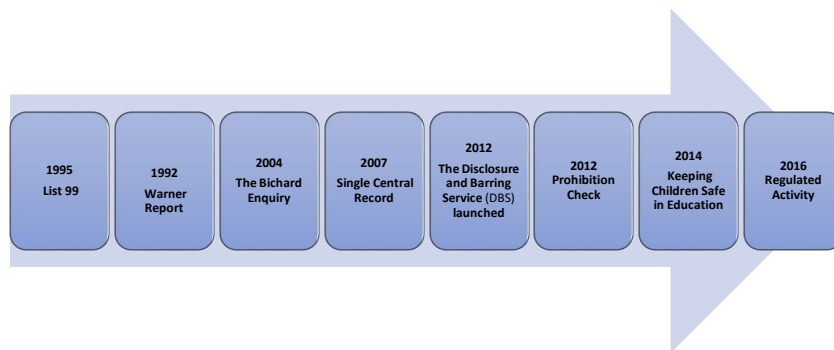
This is a general awareness guide about recruiting safely with increased focus on those working with vulnerable children, adults and families.

***Further training to satisfy the statutory requirements in schools and colleges will be signposted at the end of the guide.***

This guide is to remind those recruiting of the stages of the recruitment process and consider what recruiting safely means at each stage. The guide highlights aspects that you should be mindful of consider how to avoid.

**One strand of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is recruiting safely.**

A brief history of recruitment



Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including consideration of child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at every stage of the recruitment process. Extra attention to safer working practice should continue in a culture of vigilance and always consider 'it could happen here' this includes the induction, management, development of staff through ongoing training.

Informed by the timeline, the listed areas of recruitment below will be covered in this guidance to support recruitment.

- Ensuring job descriptions and person specifications reflect the importance of safeguarding and accurately define the safeguarding responsibilities of the role
- Advertising and information for applicants
- A structured application process
- Scrutinising applications
- Priority applicants
- Shortlisting
- References
- Other checks before interview (including online searches)
- Interviewing short-listed candidates
- Selection of preferred candidates
- Pre-appointment checks including barred list and criminal record (DBS) checks
- Offer of appointment to successful candidates
- Induction of newly appointed staff
- Probationary periods
- Supervision and appraisal of staff
- Staff codes of conduct
- Open and listening workplace culture
- Effective whistleblowing and management of allegations policies
- Ongoing culture of vigilance
- Effective supervision and support of staff

## Plan all recruitment campaigns

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To ensure a successful recruitment campaign, planning well in advance is required. Consider the availability of the recruiters as at least two people should be involved in the process from creating the advertisement to appointment this includes scrutinising applications and short-listing candidates. Job descriptions and person specifications should reflect professional practice requirements and clearly describe the role responsibilities, accountabilities, knowledge, skills and experience required for the post.

When a vacancy is first identified – whether a new or existing post, the first priority is to review the job description and person specification to ensure they accurately describe the role and attributes required. Including the desired essential skills, motivations, and attitudes for the role.

**The same consistent approach should be applied for all posts including volunteers, contractors and agency staff is required.**

### Key features in the advertisement are

- **A statement of the setting's commitment to safeguard children and or adults**
- **The individual safeguarding responsibilities of the role**
- **If the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)**

**Advert** - The advert should state whether the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) and the post is therefore subject to an enhanced DBS certificate as required by the DBS code of practice;

Guidance regarding protected cautions and convictions can be found on the Ministry of Justice website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide>

## Application Forms and C.V.s

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When we are at this stage in the process, to recruit safely, we should be looking out for the following:

**Consistency** -To ensure consistency of approach, the same selection panel that shortlist the application forms/C.V.'s and conduct the interviews should be used (wherever possible).

**Accepting C.V. s as well as application forms** - if you chose to do so then ensure you scrutinise any gaps in the employment history since the applicant finished formal education. Any discrepancies/ anomalies / gaps in employment noted should be noted and then explored further if candidate is considered for shortlisting.

### Additional Information

*This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure."*

## Shortlisting

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**Shortlisting** is not an exact science; therefore, your judgement and assessment is required. Take time to scrutinise applications carefully, returning any forms not fully or properly completed, identifying any gaps in the person's employment history or any discrepancies or inconsistencies.

For each applicant you should consistently apply the same criteria from the person specification and ensure that you are being consistent across all the application forms when assessing against the criteria. There should be at least two people who conduct the shortlisting on an individual basis (to remove any bias).

**References** check they are business email addresses and from the current employer as stated in employment history in application form good practice and awareness

Previous employers' reference – ensure they are based upon accurate assessment of the individual qualities and includes any disciplinary action, known convictions or other grounds for concern

An **online search** of the candidate is now advised as part of a robust recruitment process to find out about them. This is informed by a recent situation in Oxfordshire where a teaching assistant was recruited, the school made all the suitability checks however had the school made an online search of her name and overseas address they would have seen evidence that she had killed a child. **(Please see separate guidance)**

## Interview and Selection Tools

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Any gaps in employment history should be addressed at the interview (these should be identified in the application form).

Interviews should be underpinned by practical exercises that test attitude towards young people/children

Best practice is to seek two references from the person's most recent employers prior to the interview to ensure the information is considered alongside the application. References should be provided by a senior person with the appropriate authority. For posts working with children, a reference should be sought from the person's last employer, especially where the person has worked with children (this could be an additional reference too).

When designing the interview and selection tools there should be an agreed list of positive and negative indicators. The candidate's responses should be scores against an agreed criteria.

## Pre-Employment Checks

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The candidate's identity must be thoroughly checked, evidence provided, DBS seen and date of this recorded, self-disclosure, overseas checks (If applicable), certificate of good conduct.

DBS enhanced (with Barred List if they are in Regulated Activity)

Gather references and verified (Make a phone call to the referee and confirm they shared the information and whether they have anything else they wish to share)

S128 check for management

## Culture of Vigilance

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Through robust induction and mentoring, staff understand the expectations of professional conduct and accountability in their role.

The Staff behaviour policy- Code of Conduct is regularly discussed and considered in supervision to reflect ongoing development. All staff are asked to consider 'it could happen here' when working with children and families. There are those people in professional roles that could be suitably motivated to harm a child or not work to the standard set out by the Code of Conduct. All staff should recognise and recall comprehension of low-level concerns, allegations and the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO.)

### With regard to the supervision

Supervisions offer a platform to discuss any concerns about our own conduct and that of those we work with. All professionals are accountable for their conduct and to raise concerns about others showing knowledge of policies including whistle blowing. Staff participate in reporting concerns including those about manager/ headteacher.

Self-disclosures and professional accountability are part of the culture in which we collectively work to safeguard children, families and vulnerable adults in Warwickshire.

## Transferable risk

All staff should demonstrate their knowledge of the code of conduct and how they apply in and out of working hours.

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and to that end we all have a role to play including being self-aware and promoting a culture which recognises, records and reports concerns.

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### Further guidance can be found at,

Warwickshire Safeguarding website

Education Safeguarding

Warwickshire Safeguarding Safer Recruitment Training

Safer Recruitment Consortium