



Recruitment and Selection

1. Introduction

Childhood First is committed to providing the best possible care, therapeutic work and education to the children and young in its care, and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The purpose of the recruitment and selection policy is to set out the minimum requirements that aims to:

- attract and recruit the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- to ensure all applicants are treated fairly and in keeping with relevant legislation and guidance;
- to retain the best possible individuals in order to provide stability in the workforce.

Management guides on the various aspects of recruitment, selection and vetting to support this policy are available in the shared HR drive.

2. Recruitment

1. Defining the Job

The statement of purpose and objectives for the centre, including the objectives of the care and treatment programme, will be used as the basis for preparing a job description and person specification. See the relevant Statement of Purpose for the particular home.

The need for the job and options for fulfilling this need will be discussed with Human Resources, as well as consideration given to budget implications. If the post may result in a change of structure see policy Organisational Structure.

2. Job Description

The job description will clearly outline responsibilities and duties of the post and the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and young children the individual comes responsible for, or comes into contact with. All posts within Childhood First will have some responsibility for safeguarding; for posts outside the communities this is a commitment to safeguarding principles and the duty to report any concerns as a minimum.

The job description will clearly set out the extent of relationships and contact with

children, whilst being mindful not to attract those who are unsuitable to work with this group.

The job description will also include the location, the position within the areas structure and hours of work.

3. Person Specification

The person specification will set out the competencies and experience required to discharge responsibilities for the post satisfactorily. It will:

- include the qualifications, experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role;
- describe the competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate;
- provide guidance on how these requirements will be assessed during the selection process;
- for posts that involve working with, or comes in with, children and young people the person specification will inform candidates that the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3. Recruitment Planning and Advertising

- a) The recruiting director/manager will identify vacancy and confirm that the appointment is within budget;
- b) HR in conjunction with the recruiting director/manager will produce or update the job description and person specification and ensure other recruitment material is up to date. Statements about Childhood First's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people will be repeated through all documents;
- c) HR and the recruiting director/manager will agree the advertising strategy, selection methods, the employees to be involved for each stage and timeframes.
- d) Human Resources will draft adverts based on the job description and person specification following Childhood First standard format. All adverts will state our commitment to safeguarding children, and need for reference and, if applicable, the need for Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosures.
- e) Text and cost is approved by placing director/manager before booking by HR. All adverts will carry HR contact details for further information and will be uploaded on to the Childhood First website;
- f) Contents of the application pack is prepared by Human Resources in consultation with director/manager r. The application pack will include:
 - Information about Childhood First and the relevant centre;
 - Information regarding terms and conditions as appropriate to the recruitment stage;
 - Information about Childhood First's safeguarding policy and practices;
 - The job description and person specification;
 - Disqualification from Caring for Children information sheet;
 - Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders;
 - Application form and explanatory notes about completing the form;
 - Declaration form;
 - Equal Opportunities form.

4. Recruitment Referral Scheme

We wish to encourage staff to recommend the Charity to people they know either socially or through your networks. In particular this interaction may lead to people joining the charity who may not have looked at us before. We are therefore introducing recruitment referral scheme. Please see the Recruitment Referral Scheme policy.

5. Use of Recruitment Agencies

Should there be a need to recruit staff through an agency the same rigorous selection procedure will apply as for advertised posts. Any agency used must be approved by HR.

For agency staff, the vetting checks may be completed by the agent rather than Childhood First. In these circumstances the agency will be required to testify in writing for each agency worker that the full checks in line with Childhood First's vetting procedures have been completed and provide sufficient details to satisfy the Director this is the case.

6. The Application Form

All applicants who will be working with children or within the communities are required to complete the Childhood First Employment Application Form, which is designed to collect core information relevant to the posts, as defined in the job descriptions and person specifications.

For posts in Head Office, CVs may be accepted with HR approval; if CVs are accepted and the post will be required to visit the communities, the safeguarding form must be used with the CV to capture core data of address and employment history in a consistent manner.

The application form obtains:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, National Insurance Number and address history;
- Details of qualification and relevant training, the date and awarding body or training organisation if not accredited;
- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education with start and end dates and reasons for leaving employments. Any gaps or unusual history must be explained;
- A declaration of any family or close relationships to existing employees or Childhood First, including the senior leadership team and trustees;
- A statement of personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes relevant to the post and demonstrates how they met the person specification;
- All applicants for posts working with children or young people will be required to write a statement reflecting on their personal development;
- Details of referees. The application form provides details of what referees are acceptable and reserves to right to contact any previous employer for a reference.

7. Scrutinising and Short-listing

All applications will be scrutinised to ensure they are fully and properly completed and the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies and to identify any gaps in the employment history not accounted for.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. If minor items have been missed the Director may allow at their discretion for the form to be returned for completion or for this to be addressed at interview.

Any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies identified will be noted so that they can be taken up at interview if the candidate is shortlisted. If the form has been completed without due care a decision to not short-list is a probable outcome, however consideration should be given first to the possibility of whether this is related to a disability or cultural differences. Please seek advice from HR.

All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria set in the person specification, bearing in mind the Equality Act and whether reasonable adjustments could be made. HR advice must be sought whilst considering whether adjustments are required or reasonable.

Notes of the shortlisting process and decisions should be retained as per the Retention Period for Record document.

8. Declaration Form and Criminal Recordings

The use of declaration forms will depend on the post being applied for. The form will be adjusted by HR to meet the requirements of the post and also legal eligibility to request such information.

All candidates applying for posts working with children or in the therapeutic communities, including schools, are required to declare in writing whether they are disqualified under the Disqualification For Caring For Children Regulations 2002 and to provide full details of any criminal record, including pending circumstances which might lead to prosecution, conviction, bind over or caution, other than any items that are "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013).

Information is provided about these Regulations to candidates to enable them to make an informed declaration. Information provided in the declaration form will not be used when short-listing. Once a candidate is shortlisted the declaration form is reviewed. Any record disclosed on the declaration will be discussed with the candidate at interview.

A criminal record will not necessarily bar anyone from appointment and will only be taken into account when the conviction is relevant.

Candidates are advised that Department of Health, Department for Education and police checks will be carried out through Disclosure and Barring Service before any provisional offers will be confirmed. In addition Childhood First will complete overseas police or court checks as it deems necessary. Please see Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy. The true identity of the applicant will be verified before checks are undertaken.

The suitability for employment of a person with a criminal record will depend on the nature of the job, the risks identified as relating to the job, the details and circumstances of any convictions as well as the applicant's skills and experience.

For short-listed applicants who are assessed as meeting the requirements of the person specification and who disclose a criminal record that is related to the post, the relevance of each offence will be discussed with the applicant. The following issues will be considered:

- The seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of children, other employees, visitors or property;
- The length of time since the offence occurred;
- Any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed e.g. the influence of domestic or financial difficulties;
- Whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending;
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely;
- The degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change;
- The understanding or insight demonstrated by the applicant.

After interview, Childhood First may take up references regarding offence information, for example from a Probation Officer or specialist employment organisation. After completion of a full assessment and a decision about the person's ability to do the job a DBS Disclosure will be obtained, please see Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy.

Any discrepancies between information provided by the Disclosure service and that provided by the applicant will be discussed with the applicant as part of a post-interview process and before a final decision is made.

Where an individual has a police recording, the Director and the HR Manager will complete and document a risk assessment before any employment offer is confirmed.

Any disclosure which raises a potential child protection issues will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for review and oversight and will be signed off by the Responsible Individual before a decision to employ is made.

9. References

Childhood First requires three references for all posts working with children or in the communities. If it is not practical to obtain three references and the reasons are satisfactory, HR can approve for employment to commence if at least 2 references have been obtained and verified by telephone, subject to other vetting checks. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

The appropriateness of the referee will be reviewed based on the relationship to the candidate, a logical understanding on why that person was selected and whether more suitable references appear available from the employment history. If the candidate has worked previously with children a reference will be sought from that setting. Childhood First reserves the right to contact any previous employers.

Where possible Childhood First will obtain references on all short-listed candidates prior to interview so any issues of concerns can be explored with the referee and taken up at interview. Where a reference has not been obtained prior to interview

which raises any issues or concerns a follow-up interview will be held with the candidate.

References should not bias selection decisions as the speed of response, quality, fullness and accuracy of the reference will vary from organisation to organisation, and instead it should be used to support appointment decisions.

Childhood First will only accept references that have been sought and obtained directly from the referee.

References requests cover standard information but may be added to explore any particular areas identified as needing clarification following shortlisting or interviews. We seek objective verifiable information as far as possible, with the exception of safeguarding questions as Childhood First prefers to know any concerns or doubts about suitability to work with children, even if subjective opinion so this can be further explored.

Referees are provided with the job description, person specification and information about the setting.

Standard information the reference request will ask includes the referee's relationship with the candidate, the candidate's ability and suitability for the roles, and whether the referee knows of any reason of why the candidate may not be suitable to work with children.

For employment references a pro-forma is provided requesting confirmation around the employment, dates, reasons for leaving, performance and any allegations or disciplinary procedures. Questions related to health are only requested if conditional employment has been offered. References obtained prior to this point will be contacted for absence details after a conditional offer has been made.

Upon receipt references are checked to ensure all the questions have been answered and are satisfactory. Follow up telephone conversations are made on all references by the Director, or delegated other who has been trained in exploring anomalies, ambiguities or conflicting information and listening for doubt or avoidance. Records of telephone conversations with referees will be made and provided to those responsible for making appointments.

Any concerns regarding references must be discussed with HR before the check is signed off as satisfactory.

10. Internal Recruitment

Internal applicants are individuals who are already employees. Agency staff, volunteers and contractors are not internal applicants.

Internal applicants can complete an internal application form to supplement their original application form if all the conditions below are met:

- The vacancy is in the same job family to their current role;
- The children and young people's group is the same age group and have the same level of need as was the case when the original application form was completed/
- The original form was completely fully and would pass the same scrutiny against today's best practice and standards.

If the conditions are not met a new application form must be completed.

When a member of staff applies for employment at another Childhood First community all relevant information will be shared between centres.

Internal candidates will have their application subject to the same rigorous selection process of external candidates.

11.Pre-selection Methods

For each recruitment campaign the decisions around the selection processes are agreed by HR and Director. When deciding the additional selection processes consideration is given to the number of vacancies, the person specification, fairness, which measures will provide best outcomes, staff availability to support selection and the likely number of applications.

All short-listed candidates for posts with direct contact with children visit the centre and meet staff and children in advance of final interview. Information about the interaction between candidates, staff and children during the visits will be made available to those involved in the appointment process.

Preliminary interviews may be used to establish a fuller picture of the character and attitudes of short listed candidates. Wherever possible use will be made of group interviews.

When selection methods are to be used, the candidates will be clearly informed of its selective nature when being invited to attend or take part.

Staff involved in selection exercises have been appropriately trained in those selection methods, safeguarding children and in the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

12.Interviews

HR will draw together the core interview questions using the person specification and job description in conjunction with the Director, which will be used in all interviews to assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements.

In addition for posts working with children the interview will explore, with techniques as recommended by Warner:

- Motivation to work with children and young people;
- Attitudes towards children and young people;
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people;
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- Attitudes towards the use of authority and maintaining discipline;
- Ability to support the charity's agenda for safeguarding promoting the welfare of children.

All information about candidates gained through the selection process will be made available to the final interview panel, which will explore any areas of doubt and concern.

The Director or other delegated senior officer will prepare the questions for particular candidates to explore information provided in their application form and any

references provided and to resolve any anomalies, gaps in history or discrepancies noted. Candidates for posts that required a declaration form to be completed will be required to confirm verbally at interview the information provided in the declaration form and whether they wish to discuss anything that may come to light from vetting checks, including the DBS disclosure and references from any previous employer.

The invitation to the interview will include the practical arrangements. For posts working with children or that have contact with children, the invitation will remind candidates the interview will explore their suitability for working with children. Candidates will be required to bring to the interview:

- Photographic ID;
- Address ID;
- Proof of their Right to Work in the UK;
- Documentary evidence of relevant qualifications.

HR provides guidance of what forms of ID is acceptable, authenticity and how to evidence checks. If the candidate does not bring all the required ID to interview, the remaining items will be checked and any dispensaries discussed with the candidate in a follow up meeting before an employment offer is confirmed.

Final interview panels will, as far as possible and appropriate, be balanced by gender and ethnic heritage. They will be experienced in interviewing and recruitment procedures and able to recognise responses which raise questions about suitability and use effective probing techniques. For posts that are working directly with children or within a therapeutic community, at least one panel member will have completed the CWDC Safer Recruitment training, or alternative relevant safeguarding training approved by HR.

The interview panel will meet before the interview to discuss the questions and the assessment criteria for the post, the candidate's applications and their roles in the interview.

A record of each interview, the decision taken and reasons will be retained. In the case of successful candidates this will be held on their personnel file. For candidates who are not offered employment the record will be retained as per the Retention Periods for Records document.

13. Involving Children and Young People

Childhood First aims to involve the children and young people in some way when recruiting for posts at the communities. As a minimum some of the children will be able to meet candidates who have been shortlisted for final interview, have supervised interactions and feedback their opinions and feelings to staff which will be passed on to the interview panel.

The level of involvement will be dependent of the children's age, comprehension and willingness to be involved. No child or young person will be made to participate or be involved in they don't want to. We consider safeguarding requirements and how to manage the children's expectations at all times. Ways that Childhood First may help children be involved in recruitment decisions may include:

- Meeting candidates who have been shortlisted for final interview, have supervised interactions and feedback their opinions and feelings;

- Discussions in the community around what type of adults they would like to work there, or any particular skills or interests they would be keen for people to have. This will be feed into the recruitment and selection planning;
- Contributing ideas to the Director about the advert or interview questions;
- Giving tours to candidates with staff members;
- Being involved in a supervised young people's question and answer session with candidates.

The children and young people are not expected to fully comprehend equal opportunities in the employment context and due to their personal histories may have preferences for certain characteristics which are unrelated to a candidate's ability to perform the post. The Director knows the children and histories well and will be mindful of this to ensure employment decisions are in keeping with Equality Act 2010.

14.Appointment

Successful candidates from the selection process will be made a provisional offer subject to:

- Satisfactory references;
- A satisfactory Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and any overseas criminal record checks we deem necessary (see Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy);
- Documentary evidence of the right to work in the UK;
- Documentary evidence of stated qualifications;
- A satisfactory medical report.

The conditional offer informs individuals that in the event of undisclosed information or if false or misleading information has been provided the offer will be withdrawn, or if in employment they will face instant dismissal.

The medical questionnaire, DBS and any outstanding vetting or ID checks will be instigated immediately. The vetting procedure guide and the vetting checklist will be used to ensure receipt of all evidence, that it is satisfactory and re-scrutinised before the Director or HR confirmed that employment can be offered.

Childhood First will pay for the DBS disclosure and any overseas police checks required (please see Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy). Costs relating to immigration controls such as visas and the worker registration scheme will need to be met by the individual.

Disclosure of a medical condition or health concern will evoke the medical questionnaire process, the flowchart outlining this is available in the shared human resources folder.

All employment offers are subject to completing a six month probationary period and a satisfactory appraisal.

15.Policy Monitoring and Review

Monitoring takes places regularly to ensure this policy is being applied appropriately. The effectiveness of this policy is reviewed via recruitment and selection evaluation, performance management data and analysis of employee retention information.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually against relevant legislation and best practice guidance.

16. Handling Disclosure and Barring Service Information

Please see Handling Disclosure and Barring Service Information.

Data Protection

It is the Charity's practice to seek the successful candidate's consent for it to obtain two written references and to ask for documentary proof of qualifications. Any offer of employment will be conditional on these requirements being satisfactory and the candidate also satisfying right to work in the UK checks.

The Charity's processes personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with its data protection policy and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy. In particular, data collected as part of the recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment exercise effectively to decide to whom to offer the job. Inappropriate access or disclosure of job applicant data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Please see Job applicant privacy notice.

Key Legislation

- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (SI 1975/1023)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013 (SI 2013/1198)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU)

Reviewed March 2020