

This information is drawn from NSPCC-
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment>.

What is Safer Recruitment?

Safer recruitment is a term used when recruiting volunteers and staff to help you discourage people with a potential to cause harm. It means you must take all reasonable steps to make sure that those you recruit into your organisation are suitable and appropriate.

Following a guided process when recruiting staff or volunteers can protect and safeguard both the people who access your organisation's services and the existing staff/volunteers.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)- A DBS is not always necessary for every role. Some misconceptions about the DBS process can lead organisations to believe that if someone has a clean DBS check, they are completely 'safe' to work with children and adults at risk. This is not always the case. Without a safer recruitment process to support a DBS, there is still the potential for safeguarding risks. More about the DBS procedure can be found below.

The Safer Recruitment Process

1. Planning

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.

2. Define the Role

For any role working with children and young people, or adults at risk of abuse, both the role description and the person specification should highlight the safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Advertising the Role

Every advert for a role that includes work with children or adults at risk should include a statement about your commitment to safeguarding.

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

4. 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.

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.

5. Self-Disclosure Form

A self-disclosure form gives shortlisted or successful 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 for, and when, will depend on the role they will be doing. For more information about this, see the NSPCC's [legislation and guidance](#) section.

The form:

- ensures applicants are aware that you are entitled to ask for this information
- provides you with an opportunity to discuss and consider relevant information before findings from vetting and barring checks are received
- helps deter unsuitable candidates and shows that you take safer recruitment seriously.

Self-disclosure forms contain sensitive, confidential information. Forms should be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential' or through a secure, online system.

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

The information provided should be considered as part of your vetting checks, applying a risk assessment process if information has been disclosed.

References

Your application pack should provide information about how and when you will request references.

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

Although for roles where the applicant would be working with children, it is a good idea to ask **all** previous related positions to at least confirm that they did work/volunteer there and that there are no safeguarding concerns with that potential employee/volunteer.

6. Online Checks

Some organisations consider carrying out a search of shortlisted candidates for any information that is publicly available online.

Online checks are not a mandatory requirement of a safer recruitment process, but it is important that you review your recruitment and selection policy and procedures and update it to incorporate the online search process if you are including this as part of your recruitment process.

If you are thinking about conducting online checks, you must let all applicants know that they will be subject to an online search if shortlisted.

7. Selecting Applicants

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.

8. Interview

Interviews for roles with children or adults at risk should be conducted face to face.

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.

9. Identity Checks

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.

Disclosure and Barring Service

What is a DBS?

A DBS check is a way for employers check a criminal record, to help decide whether you are a suitable person to work for them. This includes deciding whether it is suitable for you to work with children or vulnerable adults. DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service.

Who needs a DBS?

You need a DBS if you are working with children/ adults at risk and are taking part in **regulated activity**, even if parents/carers are present. Regulated activity includes;

- Teaching/training or instructing children frequently.
- Care or supervision of children if carried out by the same person frequently.
- Providing personal care. Such as help with eating/drinking (due to illness/age/disability) or physical help with toileting/washing/dressing (due to illness/age/disability)
- Managing people who provide the above care.
- All health care providers.
- Giving Advice/guidance for children relating to their physical/emotional/educational wellbeing if carried out regularly.
- Driving a vehicle to convey children and their carers/supervisors.
- Early years or later years child minding.

Further guidance

Further guidance on safer recruitment and the DBS service can be found here;

National Council for Voluntary Organisations- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/>

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

Direct Gov- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

CBS Screening- <https://cbscreening.co.uk/news/post/do-i-need-a-dbs-check-if-parents-are-present/>

DBS Checks- <https://www.dbschecks.org.uk/pros-cons-of-dbs-checks/>

References

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DBS Checks- <https://www.dbschecks.org.uk/pros-cons-of-dbs-checks/>

Working together to safeguard children 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Virtual college- https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/?bcndyn=d2lkOjU0OXxjaWQ6NTI2&gad_id=673642696262&utm_term=virtual%20college&utm_campaign=Brand:Virtual-College:Generic:UK:Search:Exact&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=:crid=673642696262:cid=20225077606:tid=aud-1656434975013:kwd-111546762:kwd=virtual%20college:dev=c&gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI4_m6v46mhgMVsjRQBh2cNAOVEAAYASAAEqJLbPD_BwE

https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/?bcndyn=d2lkOjU0OXxjaWQ6NTI2&gad_id=673642696262&utm_term=virtual%20college&utm_campaign=Brand:Virtual-College:Generic:UK:Search:Exact&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=:crid=673642696262:cid=20225077606:tid=aud-1656434975013:kwd-111546762:kwd=virtual%20college:dev=c&gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI4_m6v46mhgMVsjRQBh2cNAOVEAAYASAAEqJLbPD_BwE