

The Policy

Introduction

All organisations, which employ staff or volunteers to work with children, should adopt a consistent and thorough process of safer recruitment in order to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people are prevented from doing so.

Safer recruitment practice should include those persons who may not have direct contact with children, but because of their presence and familiarity in certain settings will still be seen as safe and trustworthy. The principles of safer recruitment is included in the terms of any contract drawn up between The Write Time and contractors or agencies that provide services for children and young people for whom The Write Time is responsible. The Write Time will monitor compliance with the contract, which should also include a requirement that the provider will not sub-contract to any personnel who have not been part of a safer recruitment process.

Safer Recruitment Practice

Safer recruitment practice will be applied at all stages of the recruitment process by The Write Time:

- Advertising and information for applicants
- References
- Other checks before interview
- Selection of candidates
- Interviewing short-listed candidates
- Offer of appointment to successful candidate
- Induction and supervision of newly appointed staff

Induction and Supervision of Newly Appointed Staff

Advertisements and Information for Applicants

The Write Time will demonstrate commitment to safeguarding and protecting children by ensuring that all recruitment advertising material contains a policy statement to this effect. All information given to the interested applicant should highlight the importance placed by the organisation on rigorous selection processes.

The information will stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that where a Disclosure and Barring Service check is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS Disclosure to the appropriate level straight away.

The job description will clearly set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children with whom the person will have contact. The person specification should explain:

- The qualifications and experience needed for the role.
- The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate.
- How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

The application form will ask for:

- Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past
- A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including any periods of further education or training. This should include:
 - Start and end dates,
 - Explanations for leaving, and
 - Reasons for any gaps in employment
- Details of any relevant academic and/or vocational qualifications
- A declaration that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including those regarded as spent. This should also include referral to or inclusion on the DBS Children's or Adult's Barred List or regulatory body restricting or preventing them from working with children or vulnerable adults.

CVs, drawn up by applicants in place of an application form are not acceptable because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.

References

The application form will request both professional and character references, one of which should be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer should be asked for in addition to that from the current or most recent employer if this is different.

References should be sent wherever possible to business addresses, not a home address.

1. Wherever possible references will be obtained prior to the interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during interview.
2. References should contain objective, verifiable information and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people will be provided.

References should include:

- length of time the person has known the applicant and in what capacity;
- post held with dates, salary and reasons for leaving;
- ability and suitability to work with children and young people;
- skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these have been demonstrated;
- any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanction;
- **any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children and young people and the outcome of these (including where any sanction has expired);**
- **any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of children and young people**
- details of any criminal convictions, cautions or bind-overs;
- sickness record;
- if the referee would re-employ the applicant and if not, details of why; and
- verification of the identity of the referee.

The referee will be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against him/her or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children and young people or about the applicant's behaviour towards

children or young people. Details about the outcome of any concerns or allegations will be sought by The Write Time.

Open references or testimonials will not be accepted.

Selection of Candidates

There are standard procedures for short listing to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Safer recruitment means that all applications will additionally be:

- Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the candidate for completion.
- Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
- Considered with regard to any history of gaps, or repeated changes in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons.

All candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, either a full birth certificate, passport or photo card driving licence and additionally a document such as a utility bill or bank statement that verifies the candidate's name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Candidates will also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

Interviewing Short-listed Candidates

Questions will be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for, and conducted by a panel where at least one member has safer recruitment training

The candidate's attitude toward children and young people in general will be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in particular. At least one member of the interview panel should be trained in how best this can be done. All interviewees will be asked at interview to confirm if they have any previous criminal convictions, and this information will be cross-referenced with their application form as well as DBS and Children's Barred List Check results.

Any gaps and changes in employment history will be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee.

All candidates should bring to interview documentary evidence as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act and in line with DBS requirements.

Where relevant, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Offer of Appointment to Successful Candidate

Any offer of appointment should be conditional upon pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed, including:

- Where the role is considered to be working with children, either in regulated activity or in a supervised role, a DBS check appropriate to the role.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness.
- Verification of any relevant professional status and whether any restrictions have been imposed by a regulatory body such as the Teaching Agency (TA) and the General Medical Council (GMC).
- Verification of candidate's identification by observing original identification documents

All checks should be confirmed in writing and retained on the candidate's personnel file, together with photocopies of documents used to verify his/her identity and qualifications.

DBS Checks

It is TWT's policy to conduct an Enhanced DBS check on all new staff, regardless of their current DBS status¹. It is also TWT's policy to conduct a 'List 99' Children's Barred List, TRA (formerly NCTL), Prohibition from Teaching checks on all new staff – where legislation allows it. From 1st January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Advice about how information regarding a teacher's past conduct should in this situation be sourced from paragraph 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

DBS Children's Barred List searches are no longer sourced from agencies providing DBS certificates. Instead, these searches are made through DfE Secure Access facilities: <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/EmployerAccess/GetTeacherList>

In addition to obtaining any DBS certificate as described above, any member of staff who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. For those engaged in management roles (in independent schools - including academies and free schools) an additional check is required to ensure they are not prohibited under section 128 provisions

As List99 and EDDBS checks return at very different timescales, TWT implements a strategy for new staff to begin their role – with close scrutiny – before the return of the EDDBS, but after the return of the List99 and other required checks. Until the EDDBS is received, TWT ensure that:

1. A full Risk Assessment including protocols that ensure the member of staff is never alone with a student and is always accompanied by a member of staff that holds a current EDDBS.
2. This Risk Assessment will be reviewed fortnightly to ensure that it is current and amended as necessary.

All positive DBS disclosures will be Risk Assessed on an individual basis depending on the recorded disclosure/s returned in line with our Risk Assessment Policy

Enhanced Disclosure

This includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the workforce being applied for (adult, child or 'other' workforce). 'Other' workforce means those who don't work with children or adults specifically, but potentially both, e.g. taxi drivers. In this case, the police will only release information that's relevant to the post being applied for.

¹ The only exception to this rule is where a successful applicant has subscribed to the Update service; in this situation, TWT will conduct an Update Check in place of a new EDDBS application. All other checks will remain the same.

Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check

This includes all of the information normally included in an Enhanced Disclosure but also identifies whether the person is barred from working in regulated activity with the group they are applying to work for, for example, whether they are barred from working with children.

Under DBS regulations, DBS disclosures can usually only be kept for 6 months, but a record should be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained and who by, the level of the disclosure and the unique reference number.

In line with KCSiE 2020, all new staff appointments that hold management/ departmental lead responsibility will now require Section 128 checks.

Applicants who have lived or worked abroad

In line with government policy, when applicants that have lived or worked outside of the UK are offered positions, additional checks may be required. As well as the checks already stated, if an applicant is applying for the position having had their most recent employment abroad, then further checks should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed (see above).

It is TWT's policy that If an applicant that has historically worked abroad, but has had their most recent employment in the UK is to be offered a position, this will not require overseas checks to be carried out, and UK specific checks will be made as previously stated in this document.

The Home Office has published guidance on criminal record checks for overseas applicants. The department has also issued guidance on the employment of overseas- trained teachers. This gives information on the requirements for overseas-trained teachers from the EEA to teach in England, and the award of qualified teacher status for teachers qualified in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America.

DBS Update Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service is a subscription service that lets applicants keep their DBS certificates up to date online. The service allows employers to check a certificate online without the need to make the applicant apply for another check. In order to use the service The Write Time will ensure that it:

- Is legally entitled to carry out a check
- has the applicant's permission

Record Keeping

A record will be kept of evidence to show that such checks have been carried out in respect of supply staff and volunteers whether recruited directly or through an agency.

Satisfactory references will be kept on the candidate's personnel file or, in the case of supply staff or volunteers not recruited through an agency, on a central record within the organisation.

Where information gained by the employer from either references or other checks calls into question the candidate's suitability to work with children, or where the candidate has provided false information in support of the application the facts should be reported to the Police and/or the DBS as appropriate.

Induction and Supervision of Staff & Volunteers

The induction of all newly appointed staff to The Write Time includes an introduction to the organisation's child protection policies and procedures. This includes being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of those staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

New staff members should be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected. They are also made aware of the organisation's personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the relevant whistle blowing policy.

The programme of induction includes child protection training at a level appropriate to the member of staff's work with children (see The Write Time Safeguarding Policy). Senior managers will ensure that their staff and volunteers are adequately and appropriately supervised and that they have ready access to advice, expertise and management support in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection.