



Home-Start Network

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff



We
inspire
growth

We
prioritise
kindness


We
achieve
together

Document Title	Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy and Procedure (Mandatory)
Distribution	For use by Home-Starts UK wide
Policy Owner	Assistant Director of Quality and Impact
Ratified	June 2023 (Edit November 24)
Review Frequency	Every three years or following significant changes in legislation
Source	Network Impact
Directorate/Department	

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Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy and Procedure

From	To	Date	Reason	By
Asking any shortlisted candidates to disclose information about convictions	Ask only successful candidate about convictions (if they emerge from a DBS check)	June 23	To comply with GDPR and best practice regarding recruiting people with convictions	Immediate
No requirement to explain background checks until interview stage	Provide details about background checks in adverts, job information packs	June 23	To provide a clearer statement about HS commitment to safeguarding and reflect good practice	Immediate
No requirement to include someone with safer recruitment training on the recruitment panel	To include someone with safer recruitment training on the recruitment/interview panel	June 23	To provide more expertise in the recruitment process and ensure a fair process and safe approach in line with child protection guidance	Immediate
Appendix 2: Specified levels for DBS checks for staffing roles.	Appendix 2: The level of DBS check required is dependent on the local Home-Start role, activities, services provided and location.	November 24	To comply with law & feedback from Home-Starts	Immediate

POLICY APPROVED BY	
Name:	Lydia Lezama
Signed (Chair):	
Date:	10 th March
Review Date:	March 2028 or when updated by HSUK, whichever is soonest

Introduction

1.1 Principles

Home-Start is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children and young people and adults at risk of harm and expects all staff working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm to share this commitment.

This policy and procedure sets out our approach to recruitment and selection of staff (and the procedure refers to volunteers for example completing an application form for volunteers, having an interview/discussion with potential volunteers, conducting DBS or alternative employment checks, conducting a risk assessment if the DBS check highlights past convictions). We are an organisation that works with children, young people and families and so our policy applies to staff who have direct responsibility for children, and those who do not have direct responsibility for children, but who will have contact with children within the organisation and will be seen as safe and trustworthy, and through their role have access to confidential and sensitive information e.g. administrative staff, receptionists, book-keepers.

1.2 Legislation

Section 11, Children Act 2004, sets out the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applies to all key local bodies named under section 11(1) of the Act. A key feature of these arrangements is ensuring safe recruitment procedures are in place. Legally, anyone undertaking a role that involves contact with, or responsibility for, children or adults at risk of harm should be taken through a safer recruitment process. Some individuals may not be suitable to work with adults at risk due to gaps in their understanding, skills, or knowledge. There may also be some concerns about their previous conduct.

1.3 Key Elements

- Implementing safe recruitment is an important part of safeguarding and protecting children and young people and adults at risk.
- It is essential that a robust assessment and selection process is used for candidates who will work with, or have regular contact with children and adults at risk through their work.
- Internal and external checks are carried out at an appropriate level prior to taking up employed work and voluntary work. These include references, criminal conviction checks, interviews etc. See more detail about the process in Appendix 1.
- The policy and procedure identifies how to respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process.
- The policy and procedure should help to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk of harm.

- The policy should be considered alongside how to respond to concerns about employees' suitability once they have begun their role.
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection is an important aspect of safer recruitment.

This policy and procedure outlines the various steps followed in terms of the recruitment and selection of employees to ensure safe recruitment and to ensure equality of opportunity in accordance with Home Starts Equality, Fairness and Diversity Policy.

Recruitment to staff roles is on the basis of the candidates' abilities and individual merit as measured against the predetermined criteria for the job. Qualifications, experience and skills are assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

Appendix 1

Planning recruitment

Planning the recruitment process carefully means Home-Start is less likely to miss anything, and ensure the following:

- Relevant legislation.
- Minimise the risk of appointing someone who is unsuitable.
- Ensure that the right person is selected for the role.
- Ensure that the process is fair.
- Maintain there are records of the process for future reference.

Before advertising the role

The recruiting manager must ensure that there is an up-to-date job description and employee specification for the role. The job description will describe the duties, responsibilities, level of seniority associated with the role and pay and benefits. The description should outline the contact and responsibilities for children and young people, and the responsibility to promote and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people at risk that the individual is responsible for, or come into contact with through their role. The employee specification will describe the type of qualifications, training, knowledge, experience, essential skills, aptitudes, competencies and personal qualities required for the role.

Recruitment information, whether a candidate pack or simple job description will also outline Home-Start's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and to safeguarding and the protection of children, with links to up to date policies. The information pack should explain that Home-Start welcomes applications from people with disabilities and people who need support to complete the application process can contact Home-Start.

Staff vacancies should be advertised on websites and the Home-Start social media channels and other suitable advertising platforms to help achieve a diverse pool of applicants.

Application form

Application forms should be used to obtain a common set of core data. It is harder to omit relevant details in an application form than when candidates complete a CV, where individuals can choose which information to present. The application form should include:

- A statement of academic and/ or vocational qualifications with details of awarding body and date of award.
- NB: To comply with the Equality Act 2010, recruiting bodies may wish to adopt a practice that the date of birth should not be included on the main application form, but

added to a diversity monitoring form, which can be retained by HR/Personnel and not made available to those involved in the short-listing process.

- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment.
- Where a candidate is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children in addition to the current or most recent employer.
- A statement of the skills and abilities, and competencies/experience that the candidate believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post and how s/he meets the person specification.
- There should be an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting should be done by at least two people. The individuals involved in shortlisting should be identified by trustees/recruiting manager. The individuals involved in shortlisting should interview candidates. One member of the panel should have completed safer recruitment and selection training. It is good practice to anonymise applications before shortlisting.

- All application forms should be reviewed to ensure:
 - They are fully and properly completed.
 - The information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies.
 - Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified.
 - Incomplete applications should not be accepted.
- Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment or repeated changes in employment and the reasons for this should be noted so they can be discussed if this person is shortlisted.
- Information sent to shortlisted candidates should include that if people require any reasonable adjustments to attend the interview they should contact Home-Start.
- If candidates volunteer any past criminal convictions in their application, the panel should consider whether those are relevant and raise issues that need to be explored with the candidate. These should be discussed with the lead trustee with safeguarding responsibility. An example of a risk assessment is included in the policy.
- All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the employee specification.
- A record of the shortlisting should be retained for six months. If the interview process is successful, information provided by the successful candidate should be moved into their personnel file.

Interviewing

- The interview panel should meet before the interviews to agree any areas they wish to pick up from the candidate's application form e.g. unexplained gaps or queries about referees.
- The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and employee specification, and explore their suitability to work with children/young people/adults at risk.
- The interview panel should each have a pro forma to score how the candidate responds to each question and any task they are asked to complete as part of the interview process.
- All candidates should bring with them documentary evidence of their right to work in the UK and their identity. Information about suitable right to work documents are included [here](#)
- Candidates should bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications, which should be checked.
- A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the staff file.
- The panel should have the necessary information about the job to share with the candidates e.g. salary, pension contribution.
- At the end of the interview candidates should be reminded that a DBS, PVG or Access in NI is required will be carried out on the successful applicant.
- No offers of employment should be made at the interview stage.

Pre-employment checks and references

A recruiting manager should notify the successful candidate that they are being offered employment, but that the offer is subject to the necessary employment checks before the offer is confirmed.

There are differences in the legislation for England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. This means that eligibility for checks can be different, and different information can be disclosed across the jurisdictions. The links below provide full details, for each nation; including information about each level of check.

DBS - <https://www.gov.uk/criminal-record-checks-apply-role>

PVG - <https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types>

Access NI - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks>

Home-Start commit to:

- Follow the DBS, PVG and Access NI Codes of Practice.
- Undertake to discuss with you any matter revealed in a disclosure.

We expect candidates who are offered employment to:

- Inform us of any relevant information related to a criminal record check.

- Be open and honest about any information that is directly relevant to your position or to the position which you are seeking.

Managers will discuss any criminal record matters with candidates and if candidates would like to disclose anything, the Manager/safeguarding trustee will arrange an informal conversation before applying for the appropriate check. Information disclosed will be treated as confidential and only viewed by those who are suitably checked and trained and who need to see this information. For further details that sets out what people need to tell employers <https://www.gov.uk/tell-employer-or-college-about-criminal-record>.

Portability Checks [only relevant in England, Wales and Scotland]

[For England and Wales] Home-Start endorse the use of portability checks only when using the DBS update service which is an online service (i.e. the re-use of DBS checks obtained for a position in one organisation and later used for another position with another organisation).

References

The recruiting manager should take up two references. Ideally, the reference should clarify the following:

- The referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship and how long has the referee known the candidate.
- How the applicant demonstrates that they meet the person specification for the role.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job.
- Whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the application has had any allegations made against them or concerns raised, which relate either to the safety and welfare of, or the applicant's behaviour towards, children and young people. Details about the outcome of any such concern should be sought.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children/young people/adults at risk. If not, for details of the referee's concerns and the reason why the person might be unsuitable.

Requests should remind the referee that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and that relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

- It is good practice to check written references with a telephone call.
- References should be sent from the referee's email address and not the applicants.
- References should be checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily and followed up if not.
- Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not

resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time should give cause for concern.

- Any concerns raised should be discussed with the trustee with lead responsibility for safeguarding for the Home-Start (particular types of false information, discrepancies may need to be reported to DBS or equivalent and or the police).
- If you are satisfied that you want to proceed with the appointment you can send out a health questionnaire to the candidate (a health questionnaire is available on @Home). If the completed health questionnaire highlights any medical issues you can arrange a conversation with the candidate to give them more information about the work and ask about their health and reasonable adjustments.

Confidentiality

We process personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with our [GDPR/Data protection policy](#). Recruitment and selection information of all applicants is retained for six months and then deleted unless employment has been taken up.

We do not collect unnecessary personal data from applicants during the recruitment process. For example, we will only request bank account details and next-of-kin contact details from successful applicants. 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. Colleagues should report immediately any inappropriate access or disclosure of job applicant data in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

We will destroy securely any information about criminal records gathered in the course of the recruitment vetting process. Relevant data related to criminal records will be transferred to our Human Resources system, and retained throughout employment.

Post-Employment Induction

There should be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers. The purpose of the induction is to:

- Provide training and information about Home-Start's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role.
- Confirm the conduct expected of staff.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.
- Enable the line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- Ensure that the person receives written statements of:
 - Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding;
 - The identity and responsibilities of staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities;
 - Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected;

- Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. whistleblowing, disciplinary procedures.

Any concerns about the applicant's suitability should be discussed and documented in the induction and subsequent supervision meetings.

Appendix 2

DBS checks

Certain posts in Home-Start are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Whether a post is exempt or not will be clearly set out on the application form.

The level of check required is dependent on the local Home-Start role, activities, services provided and location. See the [Home-Start DBS Guidance](#) for details.

Position in Home-Start	Level of check required
Home-Start managers, coordinators, organisers	Enhanced DBS Check
Group workers	Enhanced DBS Check
Administrative staff	Basic DBS check. Upgraded to Enhanced where post holder has direct unsupervised contact with children.
Others	See DBS/PVG/Access NI local guidance and consult these agencies for guidance where required.

For further information on DBS checks please see our [Home-Start DBS guidance](#). Further information or advice can be obtained from the DBS which each have regional offices which can offer advice <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-dbs-regional-outreach-service>

Relevant legislation and resources

Name / Source
Leading Statutory Authority
Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
Equality Act 2010
Data Protection Act 2018
UK General Data Protection Regulation (retained from EU Regulation 2016/679 EU)
Gov.uk – Right to Work - https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work
Criminal Records checks - https://www.gov.uk/criminal-record-checks-apply-role

DBS - <https://www.gov.uk/criminal-record-checks-apply-role>

Below is a list of policies that are also relevant to Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure. You may find it helpful to refer to any of these additional documents when reading and using this policy.

- [Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding and Protecting Adults Policy](#)
- [Reportable Incidents](#)
- [GDPR/Data Protection Policy](#)

Other sources of advice or guidance on issues relating to GDPR/Data Protection/Confidentiality can be obtained from the Information Commissioners Office <https://ico.org.uk/>

1. Home-Start complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the [the Home Office/Department of Justice], in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information under Part V of the Police Act 1997. For the purposes of assessing candidates 's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. Having a criminal conviction does not necessarily prevent you from working with Home-Start, this will depend on the nature of the position and circumstances and background of the offence or other information provided in a disclosure statement.
3. Home-Start is committed to equality of opportunity and provide a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. In line with the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended/ Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions & Exceptions)] Home-Start will only ask about convictions which are defined as "not protected" for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
5. We undertake to ensure an open, measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences declared by the applicant or highlighted in a DBS. (**See Risk Assessment later in this document**)
6. We ensure that all those in Home-Start who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).

This form is to be completed if a staff or volunteer applicant discloses a criminal record.

- Once completed this form should be signed by both the coordinator and the line manager and stored separately from the staff personnel file. The Safeguarding Trustee should be involved in decisions arising from collecting information as part of the risk assessment.
- A review of the risk assessment should be carried out whenever a new risk is presented

Section A: To be completed by the staff member in charge of staff or volunteer recruitment and the line manager Please complete in full

Name of applicant:		
Post applied for		
Date of assessment:		
Name of assessor one :		
Name of assessor two :		
Question	Yes/No	Please provide details
Has the applicant declared any cautions, convictions, reprimands, final warnings or bind overs in the UK or any other country, or are they under police investigation?		
Is this a single offence or has there been more than one offence?		
Has any police intelligence been disclosed at chief police officer discretion which causes concern (if applicable)?		
Nature of conviction(s) or police intelligence disclosed (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)		
Offence(s):		
Date of conviction(s):		
Sentence(s) received:		
Age at time of offence(s):		
Length of time since conviction(s):		

Section B To be completed by line manager and individual during risk assessment discussion

Question (Please provide details)		
What were the circumstances surrounding the offence(s) e.g. when and where it took place, the event/setting etc?		
What is the relevance of the offence for children, families, volunteers, staff		
What is the attitude to the offence(s) and remorse shown?		
Have efforts been made to not reoffend or to change the behavior linked to the offence?		
Question	Yes/No	Please provide details
Have the individual's circumstances changed since the offence(s)? If so, how? Has the circumstances increased or decreased the risk?		
Are the offence(s) relevant to the post?		
Has the individual taken part in a specific remedial/action programme to avoid future recurrence?		
Are there other patterns of behavior (which may indicate that the behaviors linked to the offence are still displayed)		
Does the nature of the role present any opportunities for the post-holder to reoffend in the place of work/role?		
Does the post involve regular one-to-one/unsupervised contact with vulnerable people?		
Does the post involve direct contact with the public?		
Does the post involve direct responsibility for finance or items of value?		
Does the post involve a significant level of trust i.e. nursing or caring for people?		
Whether there are legal constraints to taking up the role		

Were suitable references obtained and ID checked? (If references gave cause for concern please state details)		
What level of supervision does the post-holder receive?		

Enter below any further questions you feel may be relevant to the post in relation to criminal convictions.

Question	Please provide details

Signed:		Print name:		Date:	
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Section C To be completed by line manager after risk assessment discussion has taken place

Please enter below any precautionary measures recommended for the individual in light of the above information to minimise the risk of any reoccurrence of any potential criminal activity or associated behaviour. This can be expanded on as necessary for the particular role as required.

1.	
2.	

