



Good Practice

A Guide to Recruitment and Selection

The aim of this guide is to aid the recruitment of appropriately skilled, qualified and motivated staff and practitioners and manage an effective recruitment process.

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INTRODUCTION

What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.21. The daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage
Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five)

The EYFS statutory Framework is very clear that a safe, high quality staff team are essential for effective early learning. We hope this guide will help you navigate through the minefield of recruitment, ensuring a suitably experienced, knowledgeable and effective Early Years workforce is achievable from the start.

JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description sets out the main features of a job. It is the means by which an employee's work is defined. It forms part of the contract of employment and will be used to form the employee's continuous professional development and supervisions.



The document should present a positive image of the organisation as a prospective employer and provide the applicant with a good understanding of the job they are applying for. You may want to include competencies and desired behaviours that meet the core values of your organisation.

EXAMPLE OF WHAT A JOB DESCRIPTION SHOULD CONTAIN

JOB TITLE:	The name you have given to the post
LOCATION:	You may have more than one location that the applicant will work at, if so, list them
REPORTING TO:	This will be the direct Line Manager or named person within your organisation
SALARY:	You may not wish to state the salary but could include the grade or define a range of pay. For example a starting salary and a maximum salary dependant on qualifications and experience.
MAIN DUTIES:	Describe the main features of the job so that it is clear to the applicant what the role is
RESPONSIBILITIES:	List the specific responsibilities that the applicant will be undertaking
QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE:	List the level of qualification that is required to undertake the role, if there is no requirement to hold a qualification then you will need to consider what experience or knowledge is needed
REFERENCES/DBS:	You may want to inform the applicant that references will be obtained before any offer of employment and that it is a requirement to undertake a DBS check.

Always consider what you have included in your job description and how you will measure that the applicant fulfils these requirements when you are shortlisting for the post. You may wish to highlight which qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge are essential and what is desirable so that you have reasons for not shortlisting some candidates.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS should not be:

- Full of jargon
- Too wordy
- Too vague
- Asking for qualifications or skills that are not relevant for the particular job specified. These could raise equality issues e.g. discriminate against older people who have the experience but not the qualifications.
- Asking for qualifications which are inconsistent across similar jobs

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

Why is a good advert essential?

- To attract a good response from potentially suitably qualified and skilled applicants
- To encourage 'self-selection' so that only those applicants who have the required qualifications, skills, competencies and experience apply

Successful advertising does not mean a very large number of applications but a relatively small number of very suitable candidates.

DO:

- Make sure the advert is consistent with the job description and person specification
- Keep the information relevant, brief and easily readable - applicants will lose patience and move on if the advert is too long or difficult
- Keep your message very short, clear and encouraging, so that young and/or unemployed people will feel this opportunity is open to them. If training can be given, state this.

DON'T:

Include jargon, buzz words, long or complex sentences or tightly packed text

The key to a good advert is precision and clarity, strip out unnecessary words

The aim is to attract attention and enthuse potential applicants not to explain every detail of the job

Make sure you make it clear what you are looking for

Example Recruitment Advertisement

Job Title: Nursery Nurse
Hours: 30 per week
Salary: £15,000
Location: Tree Tops Nursery settings, West Hull

Tree Tops Nursery has 2 sites in West Hull, offering day care for up to 80 children aged 6 weeks to 7 years. Your role will be to support the Nursery Manager and room leaders to deliver quality childcare and early education in the toddler room.

You must have previous experience of working in a Nursery setting. Being qualified to a minimum Level 2 NVQ in childcare (or equivalent) is essential. You must have effective communication and organisation skills, enthusiasm and the ability to work as part of a team.

You must be polite and considerate, be able to listen carefully to instructions, seeking clarification where necessary and be able to take ownership for the delivery of tasks.

We offer a friendly team environment and have a strong commitment to staff development. Any successful applicant will be subject to DBS clearance prior to the offer of employment

For further information please contact telephone:.....

SHORTLISTING

What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.9. Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Providers must have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who may have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises), are suitable.

The purpose of shortlisting is to ensure that, where you have a number of applicants for the post, you match the candidates as closely as possible to the requirements listed in the job description and produce a list of people to interview.



To shortlist effectively, refer back to the main duties and responsibilities you have listed in the job description and consider which you have regarded as essential and desirable. This will help you to eliminate applicants who do not meet the essential criteria and narrow the list down even further by those who meet all or some of the desirable.

Draw up a shortlist of candidates to interview; assess them against the key requirements within the job description and keep clear records. The requirements used must be consistently applied to all candidates. This will make it possible to show, should any complaint be received, that the shortlisting process was objective

and based upon a proper comparison of each candidate's qualifications, experience and skills. It is a good idea to develop a shortlisting matrix so your recruitment process is as transparent as possible.

Example of a shortlisting matrix:

Post:						Interview Date:								
Applicant Name	Essential Criteria 0 = not met 1= met 2 = exceeded					Desirable Criteria 0 = not met 1= met 2 = exceeded					Score	Shortlist Y/N	Comments	Time of interview
	Qualificatio	Experienc	knowledae	Communicat	Other	Qualificatio	Experienc	knowledge	Communicat	Other				

INTERVIEWS

Inviting successful candidates to interview:

Let candidates know the venue, date and time of the interview and ensure that you ask if they require any adaptations and support. Request that they bring certificates and/or copies of qualifications and evidence that they are eligible to work in the UK - a passport, NI number and/or full birth certificate. Also remind them that they will have to undertake DBS clearance before a full offer of employment. Let candidates know if there is a trial session, task, test or assessment so that they can prepare.

A structured interview provides an important opportunity to gain as much information as possible about the candidates by:

- Probing the information that they have given in their CV or application form - making sure it is accurate and consistent
- Asking open questions to encourage the candidate to talk and express their views
- Ascertaining how they meet job description requirements
- Expanding upon any points, issues or concerns emerging from any selection techniques used earlier in the selection process

The interview also allows candidates to find out more about the post and your organisation.

Preparing for interviews

- It is a recommendation that senior staff conducting the interview have attended Safer Recruiting Training.

- Have the relevant paperwork at hand i.e. job description, application form and prepared questions
- Make sure that candidates have sufficient space, time and equipment to complete the written test or specified task - the use of tests for selection purposes enables you to gain a fuller picture of the candidate and to test the attributes and skills stated on the application form or CV.
- A consistent interview structure should be used for each candidate.

Decision-Making

What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.26. Providers must ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. For example, settings must be in a position to keep records in English, to liaise with other agencies in English, to summon emergency help, and to understand instructions such as those for the safety of medicines or food hygiene.

Your reason for appointing or not appointing a candidate could be challenged under discrimination law. It is therefore essential that you keep adequate records and evidence of your decisions to show you acted properly and fairly in the assessment process.

Be prepared to give feedback. Give examples of things they actually said and did and how these affected the outcomes for them. Don't be personal, avoid judgement and stick to the facts. This is less likely to be misunderstood.

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

After the interviews, you can advise the successful candidate that he/she is suitable for the post subject, to satisfactory clearances. It is also best practice, once you have spoken to the successful candidate, to let others know they were not successful - be prepared with feedback and pointers if requested.

Employment checks

It is important that the necessary precautions are taken to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults, therefore the following checks are vital.

Usually the checks should be carried out once the person has been selected for interview, this helps to prevent breaches of the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act. The exception to this is in respect of educational certificates, references and Asylum and Immigration checks.

Educational certificates - ensure that you have sight of these before an offer of employment is made. Request copies to hold on file.

References - these must be obtained before a formal offer of employment is made. It is good practice to check two written references (one from their current, or if unemployed their most recent employer).

Asylum and Immigration Checks - It is a criminal offence to employ a person who has no right to work in the United Kingdom, it is therefore necessary to check original documents belonging to the employee,

Criminal Record Checks (DBS) - all successful candidates have to consent to a check by the Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS). The applicant may be registered on the [update service](#). To check a DBS certificate status online, you must be legally entitled to carry out a check and have the worker's permission

You do not need to pay or register to carry out a status check and can see the results from the check straight away.

[DBS employers guide](#)

Candidates are expected to declare everything on his/her criminal record. The disclosure of a criminal record will not necessarily debar an applicant from appointment but before a decision is made, consideration must be given to the nature of the offence, how long ago, what age the applicant was when the offence was committed and any other relevant factors. This also applies to students and volunteers working in the setting.

The legal position

Be aware that a contract of employment comes into force as soon as there has been an offer of employment and unconditional acceptance of that offer, even if the offer and acceptance were communicated verbally. This means that any withdrawal of an unconditional job offer will constitute a breach of contract, meaning the prospective employee could potentially sue for damages. This would usually amount to what the person's notice period would have been had he or she started work. Therefore, the only circumstances in which you should be withdrawing a job offer is if it is a conditional offer e.g. subject to satisfactory medical clearance and the condition is not met.

What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.9. Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Providers must have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who may have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises), are suitable.

3.10 Registered providers must obtain an enhanced criminal records check in respect of every person aged 16 and over (including for unsupervised volunteers, and supervised volunteers who provide personal care) who:

- works directly with children
- lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless there is no access to the part of the premises when and where children are cared for)
- works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present)

The requirement for a criminal records check will be deemed to have been met in respect of all people living or working in childcare settings, whose suitability was checked by Ofsted or their local authority before October 2005. An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.

3.11. Providers must tell staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

Providers must not allow people, whose suitability has not been

checked, including through a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.

3.12. Providers other than childminders must record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed (including the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it).

DBS disclosures and barred list information are only issued to the potential employee; providers must check the disclosure and consider whether it contains any information that would suggest the person was unsuitable for the position, before an individual has unsupervised contact with children. Where a potential or existing employee has subscribed to the online DBS Update service, providers should check the status of the disclosure. Where the check identifies there has been a change to the disclosure details, a new enhanced DBS disclosure must be applied for. Before accessing the DBS update service consent to do so must be obtained from the member of staff. Schools are required to have regard to the disqualification guidance published by the Department for Education, which is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006 Other providers may also find it helpful to refer to this guidance.

REFERENCES

References contribute to ensuring that the employee is suitable to work in childcare. Make sure these are obtained from the most recent employer, although be aware that the applicant may want this delayed until they have spoken to their employer about moving on. Receiving references back can sometimes have its challenges. Check the references are genuine by doing simple checks.



Example of a reference request form

Day Care Practitioner Employment Reference Request Form

Name of applicant

Position applied for

Period of employment

Please confirm that you are the authorised person in your organisation to complete this reference - Y/N

Position held in your organisation

Relationship with applicant, e.g. former line manager, colleague, personal friend etc.
.....

During this employment with you, how would you rate the following?

	Excellent=100%	Good=75%	Average=50%	Poor=25%
Time keeping/Punctuality				
Attendance				
Attendance at training offered				
Ability to work within a team				

Please state how many days and periods of absence the applicant has had over the past 2 years
.....

Has the applicant had any allegations made against them, been under investigation or disciplinary/warning? - YES/NO -
If yes please provide details:
.....

Please state whether you are completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not, please state specific concerns and the reasons why you feel the candidate may be unsuitable
.....

Declaration

I confirm that all the information is a true and correct record of the above named individuals performance with our organisation. I am happy to share the contents with the applicant Y/N

SignatureDate.....

Print Name

Would you be happy to follow this reference up with a telephone conversation if deemed necessary? Y/N

PREPARING FOR THE NEW EMPLOYEE

Once the applicant has accepted the job, you must then prepare for the new employee's arrival and induction. You want this to be as organised and thorough as possible to be a welcoming and professional and positive experience.



What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.

Induction

The induction process, the probationary period and supervision should be used as an integrated approach to ensure a total programme of staff development for the new employee.

Induction marks the beginning of the relationship with the employee and is of fundamental importance in setting standards and patterns of behaviour for the future.

Probationary period

New employees will serve a time limited probationary period, you decide how long this will be and inform the employee, include in

their contract. Most probationary periods are between 3 and 6 months , although they can be extended. Use this time to assess the employees' ability, aptitude and conduct and to induct, train and advise them on their duties and responsibilities. Throughout the probationary period you should carry out regular reviews - this way you can identify any issues and make plans to address these.

What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.13. Providers must also meet their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which includes a duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm

Supervision

Effective supervision of employees is extremely important.

A regular monthly (or more frequently if necessary) supervision or one-to-one session can be used to follow up on any issues, check progress and pick up on any problems at an early stage, provide the opportunity for regular constructive feedback and review objectives if necessary. Effective supervision can help employees cope with the demands of their work and can be valuable in ensuring that workplace stress does not become an issue.



What the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage says:

3.22. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

3.23. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues - particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

CHECK LIST:

- When a vacancy arises, consider if you need to fill the post
- Develop or review the Job Description, hours and salary
- Place the advertisement
- Shortlist and notify the applicants if they have been selected for interview
- Prepare for interviews, consider questions and tests
- Interview
- Make conditional offer
- Notify all applicants of the outcome, give feedback
- Request references and take up relevant checks
- Once all checks are complete, agree appointee
- Prepare for new employee's induction

Recruitment is a vital issue to get right, by selecting the right person best suited to the job you could save time, money and staff turnover rates. This will impact on the success of your organisation and continuity for the children and families.

Review your process regularly. If any stage of the recruitment process has failed to produce the expected result e.g. if the advertising method has produced too few applicants, you may want to examine what happened and why, in order to make it more efficient in the future.