

Introduction

Trustees (committee members), owners, directors and managers of early years settings work in a heavily regulated sector which aims to ensure that the children who use their services receive high quality education and childcare within a safe environment. One vital aspect of ensuring quality and safety is through the effective selection and recruitment of staff.

There is a wide range of statutory and good practice requirements associated with recruitment, and the aim of this book is to explain these requirements, and simplify the task of selecting high quality employees. Each chapter of the book covers a particular aspect of the recruitment process.

Chapter One details the preliminary processes early years providers must follow before embarking on recruitment, including creating an up-to-date job description and person specification for vacant roles. This will help to ensure that individuals with the right mix of qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge and abilities are appointed.

Chapter Two explains the importance of planning the recruitment process carefully and allowing sufficient time to complete all the necessary steps. It discusses ways to advertise roles effectively in order to gain access to a wider talent pool, the advantages of providing an application information pack, effective scrutinising and shortlisting, and the need to ensure fair and equal treatment for all candidates.

Chapter Three describes how to improve the reliability of the selection process and the checks necessary for safer recruitment, including DBS, medical questionnaires, staff suitability declarations, references, the right to work in the UK, and qualifications.

Chapter Four clarifies effective induction and probation processes, which enable early years providers to ensure that individuals are suitable for their role and are able to fulfil its requirements in as short a time as possible.

The final chapter of this practical guide provides a comprehensive range of standard letters, specimen job descriptions, forms and templates, which purchasers of this book can copy for their own use. In all other aspects, copyright remains with the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

This publication does not provide an exhaustive list of an employer's responsibilities and does not cover every eventuality or obligation relating to recruitment processes. It is intended as a source of guidance for early years providers, giving a summary of key recruitment and selection issues. The trustees, owners or directors of the setting are responsible for all employment decisions made in the setting and should seek expert guidance on any areas which need clarification. For Alliance members, this publication is supplemented by a free 24-hour legal advice line. Legal advice should

always be sought before taking management action to ensure that appropriate processes are followed, particularly where the action taken could lead to an employee's dismissal or the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

In light of the fact that employment legislation changes on a regular basis, updates to this publication will be made available online. The template letters and forms included in chapter five are also available online and can be adapted and printed by purchasers of the book for their setting's own use only. New template documents will be added as the need arises. To access the downloadable documents accompanying this book, please use the access code that was emailed at the time of purchase.

For guidance on how to manage staff effectively after successful appointment, the Alliance publishes a companion book, *People Management in the Early Years* (2015).

Chapter three

Offers, regrets and suitability checks

Having interviewed all candidates, the panel should then compare notes and scores on each applicant to reach a consensus about who should be offered the post. The successful candidate should be contacted as soon as possible and made a conditional offer of the position. If he or she does not accept, the scoring system will make clear who should be offered the position next, if there is another suitable candidate. However, if no candidate meets the requirements of the job specification, it is essential to go through the selection process again rather than appoint somebody who is not suitable.

Once the successful candidate has accepted the offer of employment, a letter should be sent to the unsuccessful candidates to let them know the outcome of the interview. It is vital that the panel are clear about the reasons for their decision. Remember that discussion pertaining to candidates on this and all other occasions must be kept confidential. Standard letters for this stage of the process are included in Chapter Five: Template Documents.

As stated in chapter one, unsuccessful applicants' documents should be retained by the employer for at least six months in case a claim is brought against the setting regarding, for example, an issue such as discrimination.

The job offer

The job offer to the successful candidate should be put in writing and must include the following statements:

- the starting date and rate of pay
- that the offer is subject to references which are satisfactory in the subjective opinion of the setting (if this has not already been done)
- that the offer is subject to proof of the right to work in the UK, in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act (2006)
- that the offer is subject to completion of the setting's Staff Suitability Self-declaration form (see page 74) and this being satisfactory to the setting
- that, if required of the role, the offer is subject to a medical report or completion of a medical form which is satisfactory to the employer
- that the offer is subject to the completion of a satisfactory trial period, specifying the number of months

- that, if required of the role, the offer is subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with barred lists check, and, if required by the setting, a subscription by the candidate to the DBS Update Service

Further to this last point, successful candidates should also be informed that:

- If they are not yet subscribed to the DBS Update Service, they will need to undertake a new enhanced DBS check with barred lists check (even if they have an existing one), and present the employer with the original copy of their new DBS certificate.
- They are required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service within 19 days of receiving their new DBS certificate, and to maintain this subscription throughout the duration of their employment.
- If they refuse or fail to register with the Update Service, they will be required to pay the full cost of their DBS check and all subsequent checks for the duration of their employment.
- If they have a current subscription to the DBS Update Service, they must present their employer with the original copy of their DBS certificate and provide consent for the employer to perform a check on the DBS Update Service for any new information revealed since the certificate was issued. Where the results show that the DBS certificate is no longer valid as new information is available, they will need to undertake a new enhanced DBS check with barred lists check.
- If they fail to produce their DBS certificate, the employer will be unable to confirm their start date.

At the end of the letter, there should be a statement along these lines: 'I accept this offer on the terms and conditions outlined', with space for this acceptance to be signed and dated by the successful applicant.

It is good practice to make offers conditional on the grounds of completing a medical questionnaire, which is satisfactory to the employer. If issues are highlighted on the questionnaire, then the employer will need to request written authority to approach the individual's GP for a medical reference. When writing to the GP you must enclose the candidate's written authority and ask the GP whether the candidate will be able to carry out the role as set out in the job description, which includes working with children. The job description and person specification for the role must be included in the request to the GP. The GP should also be asked whether she or he considers that the individual is disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and if yes, what reasonable adjustments she or he would recommend. Prior to rejecting a candidate on medical grounds, legal guidance must be sought to ensure that the decision is being made correctly and to avoid possible claims of disability discrimination.

Chapter five

Template documents

This chapter includes a wide range of sample documents which have been adjusted to fit the needs of the printed book. These are also available to purchasers of this book as downloadable files by using the access code emailed at the time of purchase. All downloadable files can be personalised, adapted and then printed as and when required. Information shown within square brackets, [], should be reviewed and either replaced or the appropriate option chosen.

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