



Safeguarding Adults Employment Standards

Updated January 2015

Introduction

The Key Employment Standards that follow are aimed at ensuring that adults at risk of abuse as well as children and young people, when reliant on the care of others, are treated with respect, free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment.

It is vitally important that all organisations that employ people to work with vulnerable people adopt safe recruitment and selection procedures which help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse. However, policies and procedures themselves are unlikely to offer the necessary levels of protection. They must be accompanied by the creation and maintenance of a safe working culture within each organisation so that every worker understands their duty of care as well as which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided.

These standards have been developed as a minimum to be attained to assist managers to reach safer levels of recruitment, training and the management of staff. A commitment to safeguarding is the central focus at every stage of the recruitment process from the planning stages through placing an advert (which will have a clear commitment to safeguarding prominent within it) short-listing, obtaining references, providing information for candidates, conducting the interview itself, making appropriate checks of identity and qualifications as well as undertaking appropriate vetting.

Best practice at the point of recruitment will help to dissuade some unsuitable people from accepting a post and it will also help managers to identify some unsuitable candidates. However, thorough and careful recruitment procedures consistently applied will not completely eliminate the risk of appointing an abuser who is determined to gain employment which will give them access to adults, children and young people at risk of abuse. It is imperative, that each organisation develops a respectful and open culture which is committed to safeguarding and which promotes the welfare of those for whom it cares. The foundation of such a safe working environment is based on the development of clear, safe policies and procedures which make explicit the practice all employees are expected to adhere to. These are demonstrably embedded in daily practice and all employees see the policies as 'living and breathing' within each work place.

The Key Standards



Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board

One; Recruitment

Information for managers provides:

- Comprehensive recruitment policies which have embedded within them clear information about how to focus on safeguarding throughout recruitment and selection processes;
- Clear policies exist which set out the disciplinary consequences for recruiting managers for non-compliance with safer recruitment policy.

Advertisements

- All advertisements include a statement which confirms the organisation's commitment to Safeguarding and safer employment.

Application forms

- Application forms include a specific question as to whether the applicant has been subject to any investigation or complaint.

Two; Interviewing

- Recruitment panels contain a minimum of two interviewers, at least one of whom has received specific training in safer recruitment and is aware of the safeguarding agenda;
- Where possible, the recruitment panel should have service user representation
- Interviews are face to face even if there is only one candidate;
- Notes are made and retained of candidates' responses to questions posed at interview;
- Interviews explore issues relating to the safeguarding for example they:
 1. Investigate any apparent sizeable gaps in employment to check for credible reasons;
 2. Explore concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee;
 3. Ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a Criminal Records check;
 4. Ask probing questions about the capacity of an applicant to safeguard and protect the welfare of the vulnerable clients in his/her care.

Three; References



Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board

- References are sought directly from the referee;
- Open-ended, 'to whom it may concern' references are never accepted;
- Written references are subject to verification of the identity of the author and for this reason are always followed up verbally;
- Any anomalies or discrepancies between the information that the referee has provided and the information that the applicant has provided, or where further clarification is required, is sought in a verbal conversation (usually by telephone) between the recruiting manager and the referee. Notes are made and kept of such conversations.
- When employing agency staff references are checked by contacting the candidate's last place of employment;
- In particular, referees are asked specific questions in relation to the following:
 1. The referee's perception of the individual's suitability to work with the client group of the service.
 2. Whether they have any concerns about the candidate working with the particular client group;
 3. Whether they have any knowledge of the individual being personally investigated over safeguarding issues, but which may have come to nothing.
 4. Whether the individual has ever been disciplined for concerns relating to his/her conduct with vulnerable clients.

Four; Employment Checks

- When undertaking employment checks, proof of identification is obtained by referring to appropriate documentation. This is restricted to the scrutiny of original copies of either birth certificates, passports, driving licences or naturalisation certificates. No other documents are acceptable;
- No one starting work or moving into a post which is designated as a Regulated Activity [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Freedoms Act 2012] is allowed to start without a check being made against the Barred lists. This will usually be obtained via an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records check. Quick check systems are in place for those working in adult social care.
- No newly appointed employee is permitted to work with vulnerable adults or children and young people without supervision unless there is documented evidence of a clear check and a documented risk assessment undertaken and approved by an authorised manager;
- No employee is permitted to start work without a satisfactory criminal records check unless there is documented evidence of a check against the Barred lists and a risk assessment undertaken and approved by an authorised manager. In such circumstances the worker must work under supervision at all times.
- In cases where information is received on the criminal records check but where the manager nevertheless wishes to appoint, there must be a clear, recorded risk assessment approved by a senior manager.
- Failure to receive an outcome from a checking process is rigorously pursued and the employee's position is reviewed at regular intervals.



Five; Post Employment

- Induction and probationary periods for employees are thoroughly utilised to develop employee understanding and grounding in the safeguarding policies, ethos and culture;
- Clarity in relation to what constitutes safe working practices with the vulnerable client group is provided.
- Both the newly appointed worker and his/her line manager make a signed record that this part of the induction process has been completed satisfactorily. The record is kept on file.
- During this stage of employment, the employee works under supervision on a regular basis.
- The worker is offered support with professional issues at regular 1:1 meetings with his/her line manager.

Six; Training

- Training to facilitate a sound understanding of key guidance and practices about safeguarding is mandatory, updated regularly and embedded in performance management systems;
- Additional training with a specific focus on safer recruitment is undertaken by those who recruit staff and is regularly updated;
- All relevant managers are accountable for evidencing that such training for themselves and their staff has been undertaken;
- Relevant training is mandatory for employees who do not have direct contact with vulnerable adults, children or young people but who do have access to information systems containing the details of these client groups.
- All training is kept up-to-date.

Seven; Safe Working Culture

- A positive obligation for safeguarding adults at risk of abuse, children and young people is placed overtly on all employees;
- All employees are monitored by their line managers both in the probationary period and beyond to ensure that all staff comply with expected behaviours and attitudes that constitute best practice within individual agencies in relation to safeguarding.
- Such monitoring is evidenced through performance management and professional development arrangements such as training and appraisal systems.



Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board

Author Details

Author	Role and Organisation	SAB Role	
Paula Youell	Head of Adult Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker, Suffolk County Council	Principal Advisor to the Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board	
Version:	1.0	Date:	27/01/2015