

### 3. Recruitment, selection, training and management

#### **What do I need to do?**

Your organisation must have effective child-focused policies and procedures in place for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.

Each of these practices should be considered separately in order to minimise risks at each stage of the employment process. It may be useful to group the processes into “pre-appointment” (recruitment and selection) and “post-appointment” (training and management).

#### **Why do I need to have these types of procedures?**

Working with Children Checks are most effective when supplemented by child-focused recruitment policies within the organisation itself. While the blue card screening process is an assessment of a person’s eligibility to work with children and young people, the recruitment and selection of your staff is your first opportunity to ascertain a person’s suitability to work with children and young people in your organisation. Your training and management then allows you to monitor and develop your staff members’ skills and performance.

Effective recruitment, selection, training and management strategies will -

- deter and identify applicants that are not suitable for your organisation
- assist you to find the people that are qualified and who will contribute to facilitating a safe and supportive environment for children
- ensure that staff receive adequate and appropriate training to deliver child-related services in a safe and productive way, and
- ensure that any issues with staff performance or conduct are identified early and actioned appropriately.

#### **How do I draft these procedures?**

Every organisation is different. Your procedures for recruitment, selection, training and management should be tailored to your organisation.

## **PRE-APPOINTMENT**

### **Recruitment**

The goal of this process is to identify and recruit someone who has the skills and attributes to fulfil the role requirements. When developing a recruitment strategy, it is important to consider the following:

- **Position descriptions**

Selecting the right people for your organisation will be easier if you develop position descriptions. Having clear position descriptions allows you to detail the skills and experience needed by your staff and volunteers to perform their duties and contribute to an environment which is safe and supportive for children and young people.

Generally, a position description starts with a brief statement about an organisation. This could be your statement of commitment. It then details what the tasks or duties are of the role. Finally, it will outline what skills and attributes a person needs to fulfil the role.

A position description (sometimes referred to as 'job description', or 'duty statement') should be developed for all positions and volunteer roles in your organisation that work with children and young people. A position description can help you:

- establish an understanding of the role and expectations for staff to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people
- become more aware of the tasks required for specific activities
- develop 'requirements of the position' (sometimes referred to as selection criteria)
- identify training needs, and
- attract and retain staff.

Your organisation should regularly review your position descriptions to assist with ongoing performance improvement.

#### **DRAFTING TIPS**

- Analyse the position and outline the skills, experience and responsibilities required of the role including:
  - the nature and the environment of the service provided to children and young people
  - the responsibilities and level of supervision associated with the position, and
  - the experience and qualifications required of the position.
- Write down the types of tasks or activities the role requires over a day, a week, a month and a year.

- **Selection criteria**

You should frame selection criteria to assess commitment, understandings, attributes, attitudes and values required of the position, particularly as they relate to children. A good way to do this is to list the duties and tasks required of the job in one column and then in the next column list the skills and attributes which are required to achieve these tasks.

### SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA

You may wish to format your specific policies and procedures in a table, for example -

Duties and Tasks	Skills and Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- talking and interacting with children</li> <li>- communicating with parents and carers</li> <li>- supervising children playing together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keen desire to work with children including patience and enthusiasm</li> <li>• values children's rights to feel safe and happy</li> <li>• prior experience with working with children</li> <li>• understanding of physical and emotional needs of children</li> <li>• communication skills including rapport and trust building skills</li> <li>• leadership skills</li> <li>• problem solving and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• positive reinforcement/strength-based approach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conducting activities with children</li> <li>- organising and conducting special events such as holiday parties</li> <li>- planning what activities will be undertaken during the next month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keen desire to work with children including patience and enthusiasm</li> <li>• values children's rights to feel safe and happy</li> <li>• prior experience with working with children</li> <li>• leadership skills</li> <li>• problem solving and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• time management and planning skills</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- development of quarterly newsletter</li> <li>- report writing and case notes</li> <li>- developing activities for children to undertake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written communication skills</li> <li>• time management and planning skills</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- referring children and families to other services</li> <li>- liaising with other organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication skills including rapport and trust building skills</li> <li>• problem solving and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• telephone communication skills</li> </ul>

- **Advertising the position**

A well thought out position description will assist you to advertise the position to attract suitable applicants. When advertising a position, you should be clear about your organisation's commitment to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people.

Applicants should be informed if they are going to be subjected to blue card screening, referee checks, identification verification, and that the organisation will request that the candidate disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving children and young people.

#### **DRAFTING TIPS FOR ADVERTISEMENTS**

- Include a clear statement about your organisation's safe and supportive work practices
- Include clear, concise details about your organisation
- Provide brief details about the position and working conditions, and
- Name a contact person for more information.

### ***Selection***

The selection stage allows your organisation to choose the most suitable candidate for the position. It provides an opportunity to select people who will promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people. When recruiting new staff or volunteers, your assessment should be based on the position description you developed for the role. Your aim should be to recruit someone who has the skills and attributes to fulfil the role requirements, or someone who, with a little extra training, can acquire the skills.

There are a range of methods to help you select the most suitable candidate for your organisation which are as follows -

- **Interview process**

An interview gives you the opportunity to explore applicants' backgrounds, work history, skills and values, and evaluate their suitability to work with children and young people.

During the interview process, asking appropriate and informative questions can help you select the most appropriate person for the role. The responses provided by the applicant give you an opportunity to consider how well they will uphold your organisation's values, including your statement of commitment. You should ask a number of questions that explore the candidate's capacity to contribute to your organisation's safe and supportive environment. As an employer with a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive organisation for children and young people, you have the right to question any inconsistencies in a person's work history.

Consider using a combination of question types, including:

- scenario-type questions that explore how an applicant might behave in employment-related situations
- open-ended questions that allow the applicant to provide detailed answers, and
- probing questions which ask applicants to elaborate on the answers that they have provided to previously asked questions.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- *This organisation is committed to ensuring that the behaviour of all paid employees and volunteers towards children and young people is appropriate. Can you explain what you see as 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' practices [in the particular area relevant to your organisation for example, behaviour management techniques]?*
- *How would you ensure child and young person-friendly practices are carried out? For instance, how would you ensure the privacy of a child or young person in changing rooms?*
- *How would you act in the following scenarios, and why? [Provide work-setting appropriate situations for the candidate to consider] For example,*
  - *Can you describe how you would encourage a child or young person to participate in group activities?*
  - *A young person you are working with suddenly gets angry, swears loudly and walks off. What would you do?*
  - *You are informed by one of the children that another child has stolen an item from her backpack. What do you say to the child who has informed you? What do you say to the child who was accused of taking the item?*
- *Think of an experience you have had with a child or young person where you felt particularly close to, or proud of, the person. Tell us why you felt that way. Do you think it affected your behaviour towards them?'*

### • Referee checks

Checking referee reports can be a vital part of any selection process. You should complete the reference checks with most recent employer to verify the:

- identity of prospective employee
- accuracy of the details of previous employment, and
- suitability of individual to work with children and young people.

If the reference is written, contact the referee to confirm authenticity.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR REFEREE CHECKS

- *Would you employ the person again?*
- *Have you directly supervised the applicant and directly observed their work with children?*
- *Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?*
- *Can you give an example of a time when you observed the applicant managing a child with challenging behaviours?*

- **Probationary period of employment**

A probation period can allow you to assess the performance of a new employee and their suitability before permanently confirming their employment.

You should consider whether it is appropriate for the person to receive closer supervision throughout the probationary period.

**TIPS**

During the probation period, it is recommended that a supervisor meet with a new employee to:

- set goals
- identify training needs, specifically in relation to risk management practices, and
- identify and provide additional support to the new employee to ensure success in the new role.

## **POST-APPOINTMENT**

### **Training**

An effective organisation requires that staff receive ongoing training. New staff need support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

It is essential that staff provide a positive contribution to the service environment and commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

Mechanisms to support this may be:

- undertaking an assessment of the specific risks and subsequent training needs which are relevant to your service environment
- maintaining a calendar of what training is on offer in a place which can be easily accessed by all staff and volunteers
- clearly identifying mandatory training to all staff and specifying how frequently it should occur, for example, training in relation to your risk management strategy and reporting disclosures or suspicions of harm must occur with initial induction and then refresher training must be undertaken annually, and
- maintaining a register of who has completed what training.

#### **TIPS**

Staff should receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and minimising risks
- the organisation's policies and procedures (including the organisation's code of conduct)
- compulsory training as required by industry standards or legislation, and
- handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm, including reporting guidelines.

- **Induction programs**

An induction program which includes details of the organisation's child and youth risk management strategy will assist staff to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

It is important to make sure that all employees and volunteers participate in your organisation's induction program.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR INDUCTION TOPICS**

- All aspects of your child and youth risk management strategy, including but not limited to, statement of commitment, code of conduct and reporting disclosures or suspicions of harm.
- Rights and responsibilities of staff, as well as those of children and young people.
- What to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them.
- What constitutes a breach of your organisation's child and youth risk management strategy and the potential consequences.
- The roles of key people in your organisation.
- Grievance procedures.

- **Monitoring training requirements**

Consider who will be responsible for making sure training procedures are followed and any training requirements are met.

**TRAINING IDEAS**

- Higher education training and accreditation.
- Training offered by external organisations.
- Training developed and delivered internally.
- On-the-job training meeting key objectives.
- Inviting police officers or Child Safety staff to meetings to discuss issues in relation to child protection.
- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions.
- Internal mentoring and coaching.

**TIPS**

- Document the induction process including what has been covered and who has completed the induction.
- Utilise a checklist to record and ensure that all essential information is covered.

A training register helps you to ensure that staff are appropriately trained and aware of the responsibilities of their roles. It also helps your organisation to keep effective records in relation to training requirements, potential areas for staff development and the regularity of training.

**SAMPLE TRAINING REGISTER TEMPLATE**

Employee/Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Details of training	Refresher required? Yes/No If 'yes' provide details	Competency achieved (if applicable)

## **Management**

It is usually the responsibility of the owner, board of management or a committee to ensure management procedures are in place to support and encourage safe and supportive environments for children and young people. You should ensure that your management processes are consistent, fair and supportive.

To assist your organisation to provide the highest quality of care to children and young people, it is important to continually promote and demonstrate respect for the rights and expectations of children and young people, parents and carers.

Organisations offering child-related services should ensure that their daily operations reflect the active engagement and inclusive participation of children and young people as described within their policies and procedures.

Parents and carers should be able not only to access all the organisation's policies and procedures, but also to ensure that the organisation is living up to the expectations within the policies and procedures, and that they are reflected in the daily operations within the service environment.

You should have clearly documented policies and procedures in relation to:

- professional development and performance appraisals, including regularly reviewing the skill sets of staff, identifying training needs and setting goals in relation to issues which impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- complaints management
- performance management, including processes for addressing issues related to performance which may impact on the safety or wellbeing of children, and
- disciplinary procedures (including in relation to criminal matters).

In addition, it is useful to consider the following processes to effectively manage staff:

- **Goal setting**

Undertaking a goal setting process with all employees can assist your organisation to encourage staff and volunteers to improve their performance in a positive manner. This should be a collaborative process for staff to set targets and make a plan on how they will achieve them. To identify the goals, it is important to refer to the duties and skills contained within the job description.

- **Exit interviews or questionnaires**

The information you gather during an exit interview or questionnaire process may assist your organisation to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in your service environment. An exit interview or questionnaire can provide an opportunity to:

- gather information about the effectiveness of the recruitment process
- identify possible areas for improvement in organisational processes, management, job design, remuneration or career planning and development, and
- receive positive feedback on what is working well in your organisation.