

Safeguarding Children Through Safer Recruiting

Little Acorns are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children; we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility in ensuring that the environment is safe and secure for children, and Little Acorns expects that staff will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Failure to do this may be regarded as neglect.

Our Safer Recruitment Policy draws upon guidance in the DCSF “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (2007) document.

“Working Together to Safeguard Children,” and “Section 11 of the Children Act 2004” places a statutory duty on all “who provide services for, or work with children” or young people, to “safeguard and promote the welfare of children.”

Aim

- To safeguard children by adopting recruitment and selection procedures that will help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to working with them.
- To strive to secure a safe and secure environment for children by ensuring all staff are suitably trained, (and are committed to on-going training)
- To plan the recruitment process to ensure adequate time is assigned to follow safeguarding procedures, such as obtaining references before interviews.
- To have a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants, and to investigate discrepancies and anomalies.
- To take advice from The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board in any child safeguarding matters

The measures described below will be adopted for anyone who works in the setting, whether they come into regular contact with the children, including regular volunteers, and those on workplace training or experience. Where a volunteer’s role will be a one off, such as accompanying the staff and children on an outing, measures will be unnecessary, if the volunteers will not be left alone and unsupervised in charge of a child or children.

Recruitment Procedures refer to guidance from Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children’s Board-Safeguarding Children Together-Safer Workforce checklist and DCSF “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (2007) document – Recruitment and Selection Checklist.

- Advertisements for posts will make clear Little Acorns’ commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and will make clear what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate. The advertisement will also include reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure, via CRB, as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualifications etc., and will state that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- The job description will refer to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and a commitment to inter-agency working.

- The person specification will include specific reference to suitability to work with children and describe the competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate.
- The application form, job description, and any other information will clearly set out the extent of the relationships and contact with children, and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled.
- The application form will contain a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to the post advertised, and how they meet the specification.
- The application form will also include an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and that all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent, must be declared. The applicant will also be expected to sign a statement that they are not on List 99, disqualified to work with children, and have no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs.
- Independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children will be obtained, and any concerns arising from this will be followed up. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, then a reference will be sought from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. (This also applies to any voluntary work that the applicant may have done) The reference will ask if the prospective candidate has been involved in any disciplinary offences regarding children, or subject to child protection concerns, and the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary action. References will not be accepted from relatives or people writing in the capacity of friends. In addition to this, the referee will be requested to
 1. Confirm the details of the applicant's current post, salary, and sickness record,
 2. Comment about the applicant's performance history and conduct
 3. Detail any concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children, and the outcomes of those concerns, e.g., whether the allegations or concerns were investigated and the conclusion.
 References will be followed up with a telephone call to verify authenticity.
- Providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or dismissal if the applicant has been selected and possible referral to the police.
- Candidates will attend a face-to-face interview that explores their suitability to work with children, and their suitability for the post. All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification. The interview will be conducted by at least two interviewers who have the authority to make decisions about the appointment, and notes will be taken. The interviewers will have attended training on Safer Workforce training or will take guidance from the Local Authority Support Officers, who will be able to support the selection process. The interviewees will meet prior to the interview to agree on a set of questions to be asked, and issues to be explored, such as the candidate's attitude towards children, and their ability to support safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The candidate will be asked at interview if they wish to declare anything in light of the CRB disclosure, and references that will be taken up, if not already done prior to interview. The candidate will also be asked, as part of the interview

process, to perform a practical activity in the setting, so that their performance and interaction with children and staff can be assessed.

- The applicant's identity will be verified. (e.g., passport, photo card driving licence, plus separate proof of current address, birth certificate and marriage certificate) Application forms will obtain full identifying details of the applicant, including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance number. Foreign Nationals, interviewing for the post, will be asked to prove that they have permission to work in the UK, and the evidence will be checked. In addition, it may be necessary to make further checks as (...name) consider appropriate, due to the person having lived outside the UK. In addition, criminal records information will be sought from countries where the applicant has lived or worked.

(Further information re immigration and work permits can be found at www.gov.uk)

- The applicant's qualifications (where appropriate) will be verified and applicants will be expected to provide details of the awarding body and date of award.
- The applicant's previous employment history and experience will be checked. A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including training, part time work and voluntary work, with start and end dates, and explanations for periods not in employment, education or training, and reasons for leaving employment will be sought.
- In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the applicant will not be asked pre-employment health questions at the interview. Conditional offers of employment will be dependent on receiving satisfactory health checks of candidate's medical fitness to carry out the duties of the job.
- The mandatory check List 99 and an Enhanced Disclosure via DBS will be actioned. Successful applicants will be required to provide an Enhanced DBS disclosure.
- Little Acorns will not rely solely on criminal record and List 99 checks to screen out unsuitable applicants, as many individuals who are unsuitable to work with children will not have any previous convictions.
- A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers will be made by applicant if applicable.
- An offer of appointment will be made to the successful candidate, conditional upon
 1. the receipt of at least 2 satisfactory references
 2. verification of identity
 3. a check of List 99, and satisfactory DBS Disclosure
 4. verification of candidate's medical fitness
 5. verification of qualifications

- There will be an induction programme for all newly appointed staff and volunteers. The purpose of the induction is to:
 1. provide training and information about Little Acorns' policies and procedures, and to ensure new staff have access to "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused", Berkshire Child Protection Procedures, LSCB Safeguarding cue card, training in the Common Assessment Framework and information sharing, effective inter agency working, guidance in keeping accurate and up to date records, which staff member is responsible for child protection issues, and the "Whistle Blowing" process, to ensure a safeguarding children culture is adopted and embedded into continuing practice.
 2. provide support for newly appointed staff, in a way that is appropriate for their role
 3. confirm the conduct expected. Newly appointed staff and volunteers will be given a copy of Little Acorns' written policy on the expected standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of staff.
 4. provide information about how and with whom any concerns about issues should be raised, and to provide opportunities for the new member of staff to discuss any concerns, or ask questions about their role and responsibilities, and who to report Safeguarding or allegation related concerns to outside of the organisation, i.e., Duty in Children's Social Care, LADO, the Police.
 5. enable the person's line manager to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability for their role, and to address them immediately.
 6. explain other relevant personnel procedures, e.g., disciplinary, capability and whistle blowing.
 7. arrange attendance at child protection training.
 8. continue with performance management, and ensure safeguarding is given a high priority.
 9. adhere to local LSCB "Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers" including arrangements for notifying the Local Authority Designated Officer" (LADO)

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1999, 2004)
- The Childcare Act (2006)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Equality Act (2006, 2010)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2005)
- Race Relations Act (1976) and Amendment (2000)
- Sex discrimination Act (1976, 1986)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1999)

Little Acorns is committed to ensuring that we have genuine equality of opportunity, and staff are encouraged to take action which eliminates discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. Our recruitment and selection process will be fairly applied and be consistent to all applying for positions at Little Acorns, regardless of gender, race, marital status, national or ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexuality, age, religion.

CRB disclosure

- If a CRB disclosure reveals information that
 1. a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process
 2. the candidate is found to be on List 99, PoCa List, or the CRB disclosure shows that they have been disqualified from working with children by a court
 3. an application has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application
 4. there are serious concerns about the applicant's suitability to work with children.

then the facts will be reported to The Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the police, and we will follow and act on their advice.