

City Early Years and Childcare

Interviewing

The most common way of assessing an applicant's suitability to a position is to conduct an interview.

The interview, as part of the recruitment process, will help ensure the requirements of the Childcare Register and the EYFS is met. The requirement is to have effective systems in place to ensure that any person who is caring for, or who is in regular contact with, children are as follows:

- suitable to work with children
- is of integrity and good character
- has the skills and experience suitable for the work
- is physically and mentally fit for work.

Interviews also give the opportunity to:

- assess a candidate's communication skills
- probe gaps identified in the application form
- ask and explore a candidate's motivation for working with children.
- ask about attitudes towards children and child protection.

Here are some basic guidelines to follow to ensure effective interviewing:

Select an interview panel

The interview panel should consist of at least 2 people. The panel should include the direct manager or supervisor for the job, as well as a committee member (where applicable) and/or another representative of the setting. An independent interviewer on the interview panel can also demonstrate a fair selection. If any of the interviewees are known to one or more of the interviewers, it will be necessary to change the panel accordingly. It is also good to nominate an interview panel chair, who will take the lead during the interviews.

Be properly prepared. The interview panel should review all the information about each candidate, and if possible, meet in advance of the interview to agree appropriate questions for each candidate.

Ensure all necessary preparations are made people with additional needs or requirements. Consider matters such as access, the need to speak clearly, etc. During the interview, concentrate on the interviewee's abilities, rather than a disability.

Set up the interview area in a way that it will be comfortable for both the interviewees and the interview panel. It is an advantage if the interview can be held in the same building as the setting, to allow the interviewee to get a feel for the workplace. It is also nice for a drink of water to be available for the applicant during the interview.

Space out the times of the interviews to allow enough time for the interviewee to answer all the questions and for them to ask questions at the end; 40 minutes is normally sufficient. Also avoid the interviewees overlapping as this could cause unnecessary waiting for each interviewee.

All interviews should begin with

- Introducing all the interview panel members.
- Detailing the position that the person is being interviewed for.
- Giving the structure of the interview.
- Explaining how the person will be assessed. For example 'that all interviewees will be asked the same questions and be scored against each one'.

Have all relevant paperwork to hand

This should include:

- the completed application form
- list of prepared questions
- interview scoring form or interview assessment form.

Prior to interviewing

The interview panel should re-read each application form so they are familiar with who they are about to meet and the information they have covered in their application.

Treat all candidates equally

Regardless of the applicant being internal or external candidates.

Stick to the agreed questions

The questions should be devised before the interview takes place. They should be open questions that require a fuller answer for example:

- Tell me about... / please describe...?
- What do you think are the qualities of ...?
- Give some examples which you think reflect these qualities....?
- What attracted you to working with children.....?
- Give examples of situations where you have had to.....?
- Can you describe how you have managed a situation where...?

Asking follow-up questions to get further information or requesting more detail to clarify an applicant's response is perfectly acceptable.



Ensure your questions are relevant and justifiable

The interview should be structured around a set of key questions which will help to determine:

- How well does the interviewee fit the Person Specification?
- Can the interviewee do the work as it is described in the Job Description?
- Are there any unexplained gaps in the applicant's work history?

In addition to assessing the ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview should explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including the interviewees:

- motivation to work with children and young people
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours
- attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people

Make notes

The fairest way to approach any interview is to score each interviewee against the answers given for each question. Each interviewer should do this independently during the interviews on an Interview Assessment form.

No telephone interviews

The selection process for people who work with children should always include a face to face interview even if there is only one candidate. In the unusual event of overseas candidates that cannot do a face to face interview the manager may wish to explore the option of video conferencing.

At the end of the interview

- Always give the interviewee time to ask questions – these cannot be scored.
- Always ensure the interviewee is given a date when they will hear the outcome and by what method – the decision should be made as soon as possible.
- Always thank the interviewee for coming to the interview - it can be a stressful experience.

Once all the interviews have been conducted, the interview panel should allocate some time immediately after to discuss the scores given and come to an agreement on the most suitable applicant. It is important that the decision is based on facts rather than personal preferences or bias.

Copies of the Interview Assessment forms should be retained on record, along with the application forms and short listing forms. It is recommended that a file for each recruitment process is set up where associated documents can be filed. For details on how long these can lawfully be held refer to information on the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



Useful organisations

Acas Independent advice, guidance and training for employers and employees
www.acas.org.uk National Helpline 08457 47 47 47

Childcare Workforce Development Team
Guide to Recruiting and Managing Childcare Staff

All information contained within this guide is current on 01/09/2012.
However, for all statutory and legal requirements, it is recommended
further advice is sought from the appropriate organisation.



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