



Little Strides

Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure



Aim of Policy

This policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a safer recruitment process for all staff that aims to ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. This policy forms part of our overall commitment to Keeping Everyone Safe. All post holders are subject to a satisfactory level of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and satisfactory professional references. It is a criminal offence to employ a person who is barred from working with children.

When does this policy apply?

Safer recruitment practice is applied at all stages of the recruitment process:

- Advertising and information for applicants
- Application Form
- References
- Other checks before interview
- Selection of candidates
- Interviewing short-listed candidates
- Offer of appointment to successful candidate
- Induction, one-to-ones and supervision of newly-appointed staff.

The Human Resources team must:

- Ensure they follow and comply with this policy at all times.
- The Regional Manager (RM) must ensure that this policy is being implemented in all nursery settings.

Management team of the setting must:

- Have a system in place that ensures (a) this policy is implemented in the setting; and (b) staff are aware of the requirements under this policy.
- Follow the manager's workflow set by HR.
- Staff (including management of the setting) must ensure that all members of staff are aware of and understand this policy, as well as following the DBS Flowchart.

General principles

Little Strides aims to ensure equality of opportunity in all its activities and in this respect, all staff should maintain a positive attitude towards equality of employment.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal relationship or is a family member of an applicant, they must declare this to their line manager as soon as they become aware of the individual's application. It may be necessary for the member of staff to avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection process.

Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with the upmost confidentiality and, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), applicants will have the right to access documentation held on them in accordance with the DPA.

Preparation stage

Once the setting manager is satisfied that there is a requirement to recruit, a full evaluation of the need for the role against the setting's occupancy, ratios and budget is required.

A clear job description and person specification, including the boundaries and expectations of the role, must be available for any vacant role to be filled, which will form the basis of the selection process. The person specification will state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience for the job, all of which should be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants. Further, the job description will refer to the responsibility and requirements for safeguarding

Obtaining candidates

The Recruitment team will arrange for the advertisement of authorised vacancies. Advertisements will be made using the most appropriate and cost-effective medium, be appropriately worded and be branded with the corporate logo. Furthermore, the advertisement will state Little Strides settings' commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All applications must be made using the Little Strides setting application process. The Recruitment team will be responsible for shortlisting candidates based upon how closely the applicant matches the criteria specified in the job description and person specification.

Along with full completed application forms, applicants will also be asked to sign a declaration in relation to any criminal record and will sign to confirm it is a true account of information contained in the application.

Should the candidate indicate that there is information in relation to a criminal record – applicants will complete a 'self-disclosure', which is kept securely and will be reviewed if the candidate is shortlisted. The self-disclosures must:

- Be discussed with successfully shortlisted applicants prior to the DBS check coming back.
- Not be considered/disclosed during the shortlisting process.



- The Recruitment team will notify all shortlisted candidates of the interview arrangements, preferably in writing, and giving as much notice as possible.
- All shortlisted candidates will be booked in for an interview at the setting directly onto the setting's Outlook calendar, and the setting will be informed via email.

Shortlisted applicants

All shortlisted applicants must provide at Interview:

- **Qualification Certificates** – a copy of the original certificates must be taken and verified as proof by the setting manager. All qualifications must be confirmed using the Department for Education's Qualification Checker <http://www.education.gov.uk/eypqd/search/search.cfm> Any qualifications obtained overseas must be verified with NARIC and candidates must provide translation together with Statement of Comparability specific to Early Years Sector <https://www.ecctis.com/Qualifications/Verification%20Services.aspx>
- **Proof of eligibility to work in the UK** – a photocopy must be taken, signed and dated to verify you have seen the original. The photocopy must be clear and the picture of the candidate must be clearly visible where applicable.

Examples of proof of eligibility to work in the UK documents we can accept for a British Citizen are:

- **UK or EU Passport** – a copy of the photo page to be taken and verified. This passport can be valid or expired so long as the Setting Manager verifies that the photo is still a true likeness.
- **Non-UK/EU Passport** – a copy of the photo page to be taken and verified along with any Visa and Home Office entry stamp as applicable. If the passport holds a visa it must be in date for the visa to be valid. OR
- **Full birth certificate** (including one parents' names) and a National Insurance card/P45/P60 or other official letter copied and verified in the same way.
- A driving licence is NOT proof of right to work.
- Please refer to the Employing Foreign Nationals Policy (HRP 5 06) for Little Strides's Recruiting Foreign Nationals Policy.
- DBS identification documents group 1, 2 and – a list of all acceptable DBS documents are emailed to the candidate prior to interview by the recruitment team.

The recruitment and selection process

All selection criteria will be based on agreed job descriptions and person specifications.

The purpose of the selection interview is to appoint the right person for the right job. The two main objectives of the interview are:

- To undertake a comprehensive assessment of the applicant as a potential employee, both to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post.
- To ensure that the applicant is given a positive but realistic picture of the setting and the job.
- Recruitment and selection must be conducted as an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against the agreed job description, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the role as outlined in the Person Specification.
- The setting manager conducting the interview will have received safer recruitment training and the interview will include exploring the candidate's suitability by asking probing questions into motives, attitudes and behaviours, through reviewing the application form including the Suitability Declaration. Self-disclosure plays a vital role in our selection process and during the interview, candidates will have an opportunity to share relevant information at an early stage, which can then be discussed during the interview and/or considered before the DBS Certificate comes back.

Interviews must always be in person. It is the responsibility of the person interviewing to determine that the applicant can:

- Explain their knowledge and skills.
- Explain all employment history stated on the application form together with any gaps in employment, or explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
- We operate a value-based interview question process.
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on a criminal record check via the application process.
- Demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.
- The application form and CV should be used to confirm the person's understanding of written English, and the interview questions and room trial should be evaluated to confirm the understanding of verbal English.



- Notes of the key points of interviews and the recruitment decision must be recorded in writing. All records for unsuccessful candidates must be kept within the setting for a minimum period of 6 months. Successful candidate interviews and recruitment decisions should be kept on the personnel file permanently.
- The setting manager should notify the Recruitment team of all unsuccessful candidates. Unsuccessful candidates should be treated courteously and sensitively.
- Following a successful interview, a candidate may be offered a position. In that event, the Recruitment team will verbally make the offer to the candidate.

Making the appointment/ references

- Once a selection decision has been made, the Recruitment team will produce a written conditional offer of employment and the Compliance team will undertake referencing. Offers of employment are conditional on receipt of satisfactory references, checks of qualifications, DBS checks, the right to work in the UK and any other checks including the Disqualification Under the Childcare Regulations 2009.
- The Head of Recruitment alongside the Recruitment Coordinator takes responsibility for authorising the suitability of new hires.

The hiring manager is responsible for informing the Recruitment team of their decision in relation to:

- A person's suitability to work with children; AND
- A person's capability to carry out the role they are being recruited for.

Referencing for offered candidates

- A minimum of two references for each candidate must be requested – references must cover a minimum of two years.
- Applicants with any childcare employment or Early Years Education experience are required to provide reference covering a four-year period.
- Applicants for Assistant Managers and Setting Manager roles will be required to provide references covering a five-year period.
- The Compliance team will seek references as required in line with the application form information.
- One reference must be from a current employer.

- Where possible, at least one reference (if not most recent) must be from an employer where the role involved working with children.
- All gaps of employment must be evident and recorded on a Gaps of Employment form.

Process for obtaining written references

References will be managed by the Compliance team. The aim is to obtain all references as soon as possible after an offer of employment has been made. If a reply has not been given, then referees will be contacted by phone, email and letter to follow up. If replies are not received as soon as possible, the candidate will be contacted and asked to personally chase their given referees.

Responses received by email must be from a business address, if it is a business reference and from an academic address, if it is an academic reference. Where business references are obtained, they must be from the candidate's line manager or HR.

As it is the policy of the majority of companies to provide only a factual reference, if they have not stated the suitability of the candidate to work with children within their reply, it will indicate to us that there are no concerns of a safeguarding nature that a childcare provider is required to disclose under their legal obligations.

Once the Compliance team has received references considered by the company to be satisfactory, they will inform the setting manager and, subject to any other conditions of the offer being met, confirm that the candidate can start.

Candidates will not be able to start employment if references are considered by the company to be unsatisfactory.

Checking criminal records

The Hiring Manager must ensure:

- Every employee engaged in regulated activity is subject to and has completed an ENHANCED DBS check with Barred List Check prior to employment through Little Strides.
- Every employee must register with the Update Service at the point in which their DBS is completed with Little Strides.
- If the new employee has registered with the Update Service, they can supply the DBS Certificate at interview.
- The candidate is instructed to bring the (correct information and documentation) to the interview.
- If an Update Service DBS check has not been produced, the candidate completes a DBS once the job has been offered.



- Only the number and date of the DBS is recorded, and the original is handed back to the candidate. Any copies should be destroyed as confidential waste. It is an offence to keep an employee's personal details from their DBS Certificate on file.

What happens when a criminal record check is received?

Positive/Negative criminal record check received:

The DBS number and application date will be added to the staff member's eyLog by the hiring manager.

Positive criminal record check received:

The DBS Certificate number and date will be added to eyLog, and a risk assessment will be carried out after discussion with the line manager.

The hiring manager will need to cross reference the DBS result with the application form and interview notes to determine whether the offence had been disclosed.

Each positive DBS Certificate will be taken on a case-by-case basis. ANY offence not disclosed as a self-disclosure during the application process form will be considered as deception and the employee's employment with Little Strides may be terminated.

All applicants with recorded 'un-spent' certificate information will undergo a Risk Assessment process led by the Head of Recruitment and Head of Safeguarding. They must assess applicants' criminal records and record the risk outcome having considered the offence in terms of:

- Nature, seriousness and relevance
- How long ago it occurred
- If it was a one-off or part of a history
- Circumstances of it being committed
- Changes in applicant's personal circumstances
- Country of conviction
- Decriminalisation
- Remorse.

Little Strides may reject applicants who have any of the following – a risk assessment of the result on their record as the DBS will determine their suitability to work with children. Additionally, all applicants who are barred by law will be immediately rejected:

- On the DBS Children's Barred List
- Banned by a court on conviction of a specified offence.

It is an offence to store any details of a positive DBS Certificate on file. The outcome of a positive DBS Certificate can only be discussed with the Recruitment team, Safeguarding team, Compliance officer and/or HR and must be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Support office staff

Support office staff with regular presence at the setting will require an Enhanced DBS check and support staff with little or no field presence can have the standard DBS check, prior to or on their first day of employment. Please see Appendix 2 of the Accessing the Setting Policy. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure this is completed.

Renewals

- It is industry best practice for all employees to complete a new criminal record check every 3 years. Little Strides actively encourage this; please note, this is not applicable if employees are on the Update Service.
- The setting manager is responsible for ensuring the employee completes a NEW DBS check and joins the Update Service.
- The employee is responsible for filling out the new DBS check.
- A renewal is treated in exactly the same way as a new DBS check.

If the employee is registered on the Update Service, they should ensure their subscription is maintained on an annual basis. Employees will provide a declaration for Little Strides to check their DBS at any time via the Update Service.

Please inform the Compliance team of any changes to signatories, however short-term.



Wording to be included in all advertising:

'Because of the nature of this job, it will be necessary for the appropriate level of criminal record disclosure to be undertaken. Therefore, it is essential in making your application you disclose whether you have any pending charges, convictions, bindovers or cautions and, if so, for which offences. This post will be exempt from the provisions of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the Act, and, in the event of the employment being taken up, any failure to disclose such convictions will result in dismissal or disciplinary action. The fact that a pending charge, conviction, bind-over or caution has been recorded against you will not necessarily debar you from consideration for this appointment.'

Review date	Name	Position	Signature
Aug 2022	Nicola Reed	Head of Childcare & Training	N Reed