

**The Arts Council**

**Sector Guide**

**Safe Recruitment**

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**Introduction**

This guide is designed to support arts sector organisations and groups with their recruitment processes by providing information about what to consider when recruiting a person to a role where they will be working with children (under the age of 18 years) or adults (over the age of 18 years, who could be considered vulnerable and at risk of abuse).

The information contained in this guide can help with the recruitment of employees or volunteers.

## What do we mean by Safe Recruitment?

Safe recruitment is the process of finding the right person for a role or job.

Organisations and groups providing services to children should be aware that they have specific obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to have procedures in place which set out how they will recruit and select people to work with children.

## What is the purpose of Safe Recruitment?

Safe recruitment is one of the ways an organisation or group can keep the children and adults they work with safe from harm from abuse and is an important preventative safeguarding measure.

## Why is it important to have a Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure?

A policy and procedure document sets out an organisation/groups position and process regarding the recruitment and selection of people to jobs/roles. It is important to be transparent about the recruitment, selection and decision-making process so everyone is clear about how it works.

### Considerations for Safe Recruitment

#### Advertise or publicise all prospective positions as widely as possible.

This means the job/role is available to a wide range of people with different experiences and skills that they can bring to the role.

#### Provide a job/role description.

It is important that organisations and groups are clear about the work that is going to be carried out by the employee or volunteer. Job/role descriptions can provide important information about the purpose of the role, key tasks, reporting structure, responsibilities, and benefits.

#### Provide all applicants with information about the organisation and activities.

This is an opportunity for an organisation or group to inform an applicant about the services they provide, as well as their commitment and approach to keeping the children and adults who use their services, safe from harm from abuse.

#### Provide an application process.

Application forms mean that organisations and groups get consistent information from each applicant which is set out in a standardised format. This can make review of the information easier than for example if each applicant submits an individual CV.

#### Garda vetting (and police clearance from other jurisdictions).

Organisations and groups should ensure that appropriate vetting is carried out for people who will be working or volunteering with children or adults (who could be considered as vulnerable). Organisations and groups must refer to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, to ensure they are meeting its requirements. The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons. The Act also creates offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

It is important that organisations are clear with applicants regarding any vetting requirement for a job/role.

If the applicant is not ordinarily resident in Ireland or has spent time living/working abroad, it will be important to seek appropriate police clearance from those countries.

#### Decision-making regarding suitability in the event of an adverse vetting disclosure.

Organisations and groups must be clear about what criminal offences may exclude an applicant from a certain job/role. This information should be reflected in policy and procedure so everyone is clear about suitability criteria and how decisions will be made.

#### Conducting Interviews.

Interviews should be conducted by at least two representatives of the organisation/group. Questions should be prepared in advance and based on the job/role requirements. All applicants should be measured against a set criterion.

#### References.

A minimum of two recent references should be sought for the applicant prior to engagement with the organisation/group. References should be sought directly from the referee and validated by the organisation/group to ensure the accuracy of their content.

#### Proof of Identity.

Organisations/groups should seek proof of an applicant’s identity by asking them to provide sight of original photo ID documents.

#### Declaration Forms.

Declaration forms can provide an opportunity for applicants to declare any information which an organisation/group may need to be aware of when making their selection of a person for a job/role. They can also provide reassurance to an organisation.

#### Contracts.

Contracts should include requirements to comply with the organisation/groups safeguarding policies, procedures, and codes.

#### Provision of Information and Training.

Organisations and groups should ensure that all employees and volunteers receive induction to any safeguarding policies, procedures, and codes of conduct. They should ensure that all those whose roles include or could potentially include contact with children and adults (who may be vulnerable and at risk), receive appropriate safeguarding information and training to enable them to carry out their job/role effectively.

#### Links:

[Children First Act 2015](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-guidance-and-legislation/)

[National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/47/enacted/en/html)

[Tusla eLearning](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/)

[HSE Land](https://www.hseland.ie/dash/Account/Login)