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# Getting References Policy - Additional Reference Requirements

For all prospective colleagues (including as and when, temporary agency workers/contingent workers, and existing colleagues who apply for a new role in Family Placement), the following additional reference requirements apply. For temporary agency workers – please refer to the see [Agency worker Guidance](https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Agency%20worker%20guidance.pdf) on Inside.Barnardo’s.

# Roles covered by the National Minimum Standards Fostering and Adoption (England) and Fostering Regulations (Wales)

The recruiting manager must, on receipt of a written reference, contact the referee by telephone to confirm that they have written the reference and to follow up on any queries, insufficient information or vague statements in the reference, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why the candidate left their current or most recent post. The recruiting manager should make a note on the reference to confirm that the call has been made, sign and date it, and save it to the candidate’s Electronic Staff File.

The information given should be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and their previous employment/work by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the candidate on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the candidate.

# Roles covered by the Children’s Homes: National Minimum Standards

Telephone enquires must be made by the recruiting manager as well as getting written references to verify the individual’s suitability and follow-up on any queries, insufficient information or vague statements in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why the candidate left their current or most recent post. The recruiting manager should make a note of the conversation, sign and date it, and save it to the candidate’s Electronic Staff File.

The information given should be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and their previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the candidate on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the candidate.

# Roles covered by the National Care Standards in Scotland

It is normal practice to obtain references from the candidate’s current employer and a minimum of **two** additional references – although further references may need to be obtained to ensure that the requirements under Barnardo’s [Getting References Policy and Procedure](https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/employee-and-volunteer-support/recruiting-employees-and-apprentices/getting-references-policy) are met. There is also a requirement for the recruiting manager to verify the references by telephone and follow-up on any queries, insufficient information or vague statements in the reference, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why the candidate left their current or most recent post. The recruiting manager should make a note of the conversation, sign and date it, and save it to the candidate’s Electronic Staff File.

The information given should be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and their previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the candidate on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the candidate.

# In Northern Ireland roles that come in to contact with children and young people

Barnardo’s adheres to the policy framework set out in the ‘[Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland’](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland). This makes reference to the [‘Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care’](https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2022/05/Keeping-Children-Safe-Our-Duty-to-Care.pdf) standards and guidance for the protection of children and young people. Therefore, telephone enquires must be made by the recruiting manager as well as getting written references to verify the individual’s suitability to work with children and young people, and follow-up on any query, insufficient information or unclear statements, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why a candidate left their current or most recent post. The recruiting manager should make a note of the conversation, sign and date it, and save it to the candidate’s Electronic Staff File.

The information given should also be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and their previous employment/work by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the candidate on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the candidate.

# School-based colleagues

To ensure robust standards for safer recruitment, references must be requested and taken up prior to interview on all shortlisted candidates applying for posts in a school. This ensures that Barnardo’s is meeting the standards expected by Ofsted and those set out in the statutory guidance [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

* A minimum of two references covering at least the previous five years must be supplied for all regulated activity posts. Open References e.g. those addressed to whom it may concern are not acceptable.
* If it isn’t possible to obtain a full five year reference history prior to interview, the recruiting manager must ensure that they are received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before any appointment is confirmed. Any offer of appointment will be subject to satisfactory references and the normal pre-appointment checks.
* Where a candidate is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer for whom the person was most recently employed in work with children including the reason for leaving, in addition to the current or most recent employer (which may mean going further back than the previous five years).
* To help ensure the Interview Panel maintain an objective judgement about each candidate, and their decision is as fair and as unbiased as is possible, only the recruiting manager (the Panel Chair) will be provided with copies of references prior to the interview.
* References must be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily and against the information provided in the application form, ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why the candidate left their current or most recent post. In doing so, the recruiting manager should clarify any content which is vague or where insufficient information is provided and/or explore any issues of concern, any discrepancies with the referee in advance of the interview and then with the candidate on the day.
* In line with the Equality Act 2010, health/sickness absence information is only requested once a conditional offer has been made.
* Recruiting managers should always seek advice from their People Team when considering withdrawing any offer of employment.

# Version History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document History** | **Date** | **Author** | **Comments** | **Approval** |
| 1.0 | 01.01.20 | Policy & Advice |  |  |
| 2.0 | 01.07.24 | People Strategy & Projects Team | Update to include new brand. |  |