

## **Obtaining References Policy - Additional Reference Requirements**

For all prospective staff (including as and when workers, temporary agency workers/contingent workers, and existing staff 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 on Inside.Barnardo's.

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

The hiring line 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 or ambivalent statements in the reference, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why an applicant's previous post ended, if it has involved working with children and/or adults at risk. The line 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 line manager as well as obtaining written references to verify the individual's suitability and follow-up on any queries or ambivalent statements in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why an applicant's previous post ended, if it has involved working with children and/or adults at risk. The line 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 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 Obtaining References policy are met. There is also a requirement for the line manager to verify the references by telephone and follow-up on any queries or ambivalent statements in the reference, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why an applicant's previous post ended, if it has involved

working with children and/or adults at risk. The line 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*'. This makes reference to the '*Getting It Right*' standards of practice for the protection of children and young people which are included in the '*Keeping Children Safe - Our Duty to Care*' guidance. Therefore telephone enquires must be made by the line manager as well as obtaining written references to verify the individual's suitability particularly to work with children and young people, and follow-up on any queries or ambivalent statements, in particular ensuring that they have a clear understanding as to why an applicant's previous post ended, if it has involved working with children and/or adults at risk. The line 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 Staff**

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 (a pro forma is provided for this purpose). This ensures that Barnardo's is meeting the standards expected by Ofsted and the recommended practice set out in the *Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (2019)*.

- A minimum of two references covering at least the previous five years must be supplied for all regulated activity posts.
- If it isn't possible to obtain a full five year reference history prior to interview, the line manager must ensure that they are received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before any person's appointment is confirmed. Any offer of appointment will be subject to satisfactory references and the normal pre-appointment checks.
- Where an applicant 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. In doing so, the recruiting manager should raise any reference related questions 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, health/sickness absence information is only requested once a conditional offer has been made. A follow up pro forma is provided for requesting such information.
- Recruiting managers should always seek advice from their LPT when considering withdrawing any offer of employment.

Jan 2020