



Safeguarding Standards

In Human Resource Management

A Guide to Safer Recruitment, Selection & Management of the Workforce

A SAFE ORGANISATION

Ensures that its governing body, all of its employees, commissioned or contracted agents and volunteers or adults participants are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

April 2008 Edition 3

Southwark Safeguarding Children Board
& Southwark Safeguarding Adults Partnership

Foreword

Southwark Council, the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board and the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Partnership are pleased to publish these parallel revised editions of guidance in Safer Recruitment and Safer Disciplinary Decisions.

In 2004 two major Inquiries were published into the abuse of children and vulnerable adults, the Richard Inquiry into the murder of children by Ian Huntley, a school caretaker; and the Shipman Inquiry into the murders of adult patients by Dr Harold Shipman. Since then, Southwark Council, Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust, and the two safeguarding partnerships have provided strong leadership to local agencies in the public, voluntary, independent and private sectors to ensure that children and vulnerable adults receiving services within Southwark are safeguarded.

All Southwark organisations have been asked to adopt the Safe Organisation Checklist¹ and the Boards have provided multi-agency training and materials for agencies in safe recruitment and the management of allegations against staff or volunteers who work in positions of trust with children and vulnerable adults.

For Southwark Council managers and staff this guidance is the Council's agreed procedure to be followed in all cases. For partner members of the Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Partnership the guidance is advisory and best practice in this area.



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Further advice can be obtained from the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board or the Safeguarding Adults Partnership.

¹ The Safe Organisation Checklist is reproduced at the rear of this guidance and can be ordered from the SSCB or the SAP in poster format A3 or A4 size

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Safeguarding in Human Resource Management

This guide applies to all people working with children and vulnerable adults whether employed directly, agency workers, volunteers, contractors etc.

Whilst written for those under direct control of Southwark Council it is expected that partners provide equal rigour to their people processes.

Background and Introduction

In the Human Resources (HR) function, the term 'safeguarding' can be applied in a number of contexts. In Southwark the term is used in the context of protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm and being a safe organisation with safe HR policies, procedures and practices that are known and understood. This document sets out the standards expected not just of HR teams, but also of all managers responsible for recruitment, selection and management of the workforce.

The Richard Inquiry² triggered a need for organisations to review the adequacy of recruitment checking / screening arrangements. This guide identifies the primary source documents and summarises minimum standards and checklists to aid better safeguarding in Human Resource Management (HRM) in Southwark Council – particularly in recruitment and selection. The standards must be followed at all times and any proposed deviation must be raised through the functional / professional HR line and the nominated service safeguarding leads.

This document is about reducing risk by putting in place clear standards and robust practices to protect vulnerable people. This means deterring and preventing unsuitable people being put in positions where they can cause harm and, on the rare occasions unsuitable people are found in the organisation, they are exited effectively and as far as possible are prevented from moving on to another organisation to do the same.

Also there is greater clarity about the role of a responsible Appointing Manager and their responsibilities in risk assessment and 'sign off' of all appointments / placements.

The position regarding checks on agency, overseas³ and self-employed has been strengthened and additional control measures are in place for safer identity checking, engagement and management of these workers. This is an area of identified vulnerability and *partner organisations are strongly recommended to review their own policies and practices in this area.*

1. Safer selection – Guidelines for checking / screening staff

Unsafe selection stores up trouble for the future and is extremely damaging to the child / adult. It can prove costly in real terms⁴ and extremely damaging to the Council's reputation and standing.

It is relatively easy for an organisation to make clear to would-be applicants in its policy statements and staff selection procedures that the organisation has an offender-aware culture. *This encourages good applicants and actively discourages offenders (Utting 1997 p 133).* This culture is emphasised through the Council's recruitment website and accompanying literature⁵.

² Inquiry into how Ian Huntley came to be employed as the caretaker at Soham Village College

³ The CRB website details the availability of criminal records from overseas. The General Social Care Council has a separate registration process for overseas Social Workers www.crb.gov.uk

⁴ The time cost of Warner recruitment for 5 candidates is estimated to total 65 hours. The time cost of one full disciplinary investigation from preliminary investigation to Employment Tribunal is estimated at 225 hours – not including cost of suspension, cover, legal fees, and witnesses at hearings. Add to this the cost of psychotherapy for one year for a child abused in care of £4000 and police costs of £8000 upwards

⁵ It is mandatory for all adverts to be processed through the agreed contract route

The recruitment procedure and branded materials aim to give a consistent message that the Council is aware about sex offenders and abusers and that we implement a rigorous selection process to screen out unsuitable people. The best safeguard is a high standard of management practice and quality control consistently applied; which, in addition to recruitment, includes induction, performance management, appraisal, supervision and monitoring.

The Council has a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults and to safeguard their rights. Staff's responsibility to protect vulnerable service users must be stated in job descriptions, reiterated during interview and induction, and backed up by appropriate criteria in person specifications (even where it appears implicit in the role). This equally applies to support staff and others involved in supervision, information management, disciplinary and contracting decisions.

All job descriptions, person specifications and selection criteria should be reviewed by the Appointing Manager⁶ prior to advertisement and HR should ensure that the requirement for level of CRB check⁷, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Exemptions Order, POVA/POCA/List 99, GSCC/GTC or other registration requirements are clearly stated in job documentation. For these reasons, care should be exercised when drawing up job descriptions and person specifications, and classification for checking requirements.

Appropriate selection and testing methods should be drawn up that cover all criteria. The aim of the selection process is to obtain key relevant and comprehensive information on all candidates by applying consistent procedures, in order to make fair comparisons. Probing during interview questioning is essential in order to elicit complete responses⁸. Candidates should be given the opportunity to withdraw if they find the probing difficult. Selection panel members **must** have been trained (mandatory corporate recruitment and selection training and as supplemented).

To ensure a full understanding of the requirements of the job and its challenges, for some jobs, Warner 'informal' interviews are used, conducted by a skilled experienced interviewer(s). The interviewer can explore the processes that influence a range of undesired behaviours including paedophile tendencies and the propensity to initiate sexual interactions with children (*for more information contact Departmental HR Manager*).

2. Recruitment and Selection Checks Overview

To increase the threshold of protection, a combination of positive selection steps must be implemented. Key ones are:

1. Reserve the right to approach any previous employer (take up all relevant care and other references over a significant period of time). It is essential to cover gaps in CV / employment history (and check dates against references, pensions, continuous service etc. information) so there is a complete history on file. The Panel Chair should identify at interview who should be approached for references (record on application form). Directors, HR and senior managers should be referees wherever possible; do not risk unauthorised / fraudulent ones
2. Check with former employers the reason previous employment ended (read between the lines, record any telephone conversations, take references on internal candidates)
3. Identify gaps or inconsistencies in records including multiple employment (explore these in formal and informal interviews and references)
4. Always have all references, CRB check, qualifications, feedback from formal interview panel, test scores and medical clearance before Warner Interview so these can be considered as part of that process
5. Dependent on the job, interviews should be supplemented with other appropriate selection tools. In particular, there should be considered use of the Occupational

⁶ Normally business manager or panel chair, who is responsible for "signing off" appointment

⁷ Each Department must hold a list, regularly reviewed

⁸ Probing is not 'anti equal opportunities'

Assessment. The OA Team can advise on suitable testing that offers more objective and informed assessments of candidates; occupational personality questionnaires, group interviews and other selection methods

6. Ensure that references are read and cleared by the Appointing Manager. References to be signed off / discussed with the candidate where necessary as they form an interactive investigatory part of the process
7. Do not make appointments subject to references or any other essential check
8. Confirm identity through official documents (birth certificate, passport etc.). Make sure the person who starts work is the same person who attended for interview and assessments, and completed the application form through *on-the-day* identity checks, e.g. handwriting. When working in an off-site unit, ensure that identity is verified in the unit so that the person that turns up for work is the same identity checked by HR; photographed ID card is the best method
9. Verify the authenticity of qualifications and references directly (telephone contact, check referee is legitimate, headed paper etc.). Insist on original documents (check GTC/GSCC register online). HR staff to take photocopies for file and record who saw the original and when⁹
10. The Appointing Manager is the key decision-maker who 'signs off' the documentation and clears the appointment. Where there are gaps or matters of judgement the Appointing Manager will undertake a risk assessment and identify further action, e.g. more references, further interviewing, restrictions on duties etc. Any such risk management decision must be properly and fully recorded by the Appointing Manager
11. Make all appointments to work with children and vulnerable adults subject to rigorous performance management, including internal transfers. See guide: 'New Employees & Performance'¹⁰ ([Southwark > Intranet](#))

Modified version of Warner 1992 4.41; Support Force for Children's Residential Care 1995

3. Safeguarding in Human Resources – Agency workers / contractors

Recruitment processes should be rigorous for **all** who work with children and vulnerable adults, this includes all agency and temporary staff, volunteers, escort and transport agencies, students on placement, consultants, independent visitors, contractors and Councillors meeting with looked after children. CRB, identity checks and references are essential. '*Warner Interviews*' should be used as for permanent selection to key 'high risk' positions. In short, if in doubt, process and checks should be as rigorous as for permanent recruitment.

In using agency staff, managers are relying on the agencies, and through the service provider¹¹, to apply the proper selection and checking arrangements on their behalf. Passing responsibility on in this way entails risk which has been minimised by using the Council's approved service provider who is contractually responsible for vetting candidates to high-risk positions and auditing vendor agencies.

All vendor agencies providing social care, and other staff with access to children and vulnerable adults, will have a specific service agreement, which outlines their responsibilities and the expectations placed upon them when proposing workers for placement. Failure to reach quality standards will result in removal from the approved list of suppliers. The service provider will monitor / audit these agencies quarterly to ensure quality standards are maintained. Corporate HR will review and periodically check the audit reports for agency screening / checking arrangements.

⁹ Managers need to ensure responsible staff are confident and competent – have the skills to challenge where doubts exist

¹⁰ Council does not have a contractual probation period (Local Authority conditions do not allow probation for Local Authority transfers) all new appointments should follow a proper induction process

¹¹ Service Provider is the term coined, which describes the broker who will source agency workers from panel vendors. They do not provide workers themselves.

Some job types will be identified as 'high risk' posts (i.e. those with direct care responsibilities). In those cases the Service Provider will undertake sight of documentation before workers will be put forward for selection. Documents include:¹²

- Professional references – 2 minimum (not 'To Whom It May Concern')
- Identity checks
- Qualification checks
- POVA / POCA / List 99
- Medical clearance
- Disclosure and CRB check

The Service Provider will hold documents and supply them as requested.

Through procurement rules, all contractors who provide services which would fall under the safeguarding umbrella are required to follow appropriate checking procedures. As contracts are renewed, these requirements are being written into contract documentation. Where services are being subcontracted, managers need to be confident that safeguarding principles are being upheld.

4. References

Minimum requirement is for at least two relevant references (not friends or relatives) received directly by the department. Key reference to be from a last employer or one most relevant for position (*as a general rule, check for posts working with young people or vulnerable adults over the last 7-10 years*). If there are concerns about past employment record any number of previous employers may be contacted for reference and ought to be. Notes of any telephone discussions should be kept.

HR has the responsibility to send the standard pro-forma or customised reference request, including copy of job description and person specification. Warner and DCFS guidance recommends specific questions about the applicant's performance history, strengths and weaknesses and disciplinary history – including expired offences. Referees should be reminded about their legal liability for references, that the reference should contain no material misstatement or omission.

Important points to bear in mind when receiving or giving references (for more detail refer to HR Guide to References - [Southwark > Intranet](#) :

- The Appointing Manager or Panel Chair should agree with HR and mark on the application form who should be approached for references¹³ having regard to any gaps in employment or issues arising from interview, that need further enquiry
- Personal references are of limited value and should be treated with caution. They should not substitute for minimum 2 work references
- Managers are entitled to make appropriate enquiries with regard to anything in a reference that requires investigation and to have regard for anything revealed by such investigations. If necessary, customise reference requests¹⁴
- The requirement on a prospective employer is to consider in good faith whatever references are received and to judge whether they are satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If this is followed and the Appointing Manager decides that the reference is unsatisfactory, a decision to withdraw the job offer is unlikely to be challenged successfully. No inhibition exists to restrain the employer from making further and appropriate enquiries of the provider of a reference, the applicant for the job or anyone else deemed relevant
- A key lesson from the Bichard Inquiry is that Managers should not accept open or 'To whom it may concern' references¹⁵

¹² See minimum safeguarding agreement with service provider

¹³ At minimum 2 professional references; relevant to the post applied for; covering a number of years – as a general rule 7-10 for care posts

¹⁴ Warner advocates it as best practice

¹⁵ Southwark managers should not provide them either

- All contacts should be documented and held on file, to which the employee or prospective employee has access, under the Open Files Policy
- References should be checked against application forms to verify dates of employment
- Managers should read between the lines, verify the authenticity of the referee and if the content is ambiguous or unguarded, seek expansion by telephone and take a note of it
- References must be signed by the author

Issues around provision of references:

- References should provide accurate and relevant information about the applicants
- There is no legal obligation, apart from some special areas of industry e.g. finance, for an employer to provide ex-employees with any form of reference. It is however generally accepted that an employer is under a social duty to do so
- An employer owes a duty of care to a former employee in the provision of a reference. As such an employer is liable to compensate an individual for any financial loss incurred as a result of a negligent reference
- The employer is under a 'duty of care' to provide a reference that is 'true, accurate and fair', but, although it must not give an unfair or misleading impression overall, it does not have to be 'full and comprehensive'
- A reference must be fair and reasonable, not just accurate. Statements in a reference should not refer to complaints or difficulties that have not been raised with the employee concerned
- Reference disclaimers (such as the one the Officers of the Council use when providing work related references) may ultimately be subject to a test of reasonableness made under the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977. It is likely to be regarded as unreasonable to attempt to disclaim liability in respect of facts in the reference
- References should not be refused for employees who have previously raised discrimination complaints, nor should such employees be provided with intentionally bad references
- A 'health warning' should accompany many references as on occasion, how to convey the truth without actually spelling it out is becoming elevated almost to the level of an art, principally because of the risks inherent on being too explicit on occasions
- References should not be provided direct to prospective employers for agency staff. Performance reports should be given to agencies that are responsible for the provision of references

5. Relevant information for candidates

Applicants should be advised that:

- We reserve the right to approach any current or previous employer for a reference
- We will ask about disciplinary offences, including those that have expired
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Exemption Order applies so we will ask about 'spent' convictions
- We will CRB check at the level specified for the post
- Providing false information will lead to no appointment or dismissal
- Failing to declare conviction, caution or pending police action disqualifies the applicant for employment
- They will be required to participate in appropriate testing e.g. group exercise, Warner Interview, verbal and numerical reasoning tests, Occupational Personality Questionnaire etc. as relevant to the post
- Offers but not appointments are 'subject to...' i.e. no waivers and no unsupervised access to children until all appropriate checks carried out
- Whilst there is no time-bound probation period, structured performance management is undertaken for all staff; rigorously with new staff. Under-performing staff will be managed under the capability procedure

Interviews are to follow Southwark guidelines. Following the interview, individual markings (and where appropriate assessment centre) a joint score is determined and recorded in the Assessment Grid authorised by the Panel Chair.

The Chair of the Panel must ensure there is a full employment history, including part-time, to the nearest month **including gaps**, and reason for leaving (HR will check against references). Also to establish any other names the person is known by, for CRB check purposes.

6. The Conduct of the Warner interview

For identified high-risk posts, potential appointees are required to have the Informal (Warner) Interview. The applicant should be given sufficient explanation about the nature and purpose of the interview.

The panel will consist of two interviewers – in some instances with an observer. The panel should, wherever practicable, be balanced in relation to gender and ethnicity. The senior person will be skilled ('fit to practice') and experienced in the conduct of Warner interviews and be familiar with the Warner guidelines. Organisations should determine their own 'fit to practice' standards, based on training / competence considerations.

The Informal interview panel to follow the Warner pro-forma and guidelines and be provided with appropriate background documents, especially feedback notes from the interviewing panel identifying where there are areas of weakness or areas to be explicitly followed-up, e.g. attitudes to power, authority, abuse. Background documents include:

- Disclosure form and CRB response
- References, plus any supplemental intelligence
- Occupational Assessment report (if available)
- Health information including any Disability factors to be explored

7. Post Interview Clearances & Risk Assessment

For each recruitment process an Appointing Manager should be determined. Often this will be the panel chair. The Appointing Manager is responsible for the final decision and where there are any doubts or deficiencies, will undertake a risk assessment (signed and dated) before confirming any appointment.

The following information should be available to the Appointing Manager in order for an informed decision-making process to take place, and before a start date is arranged and employment starts:

Summary of interview and scores
Feedback from occupational assessment (where used)
Warner interview feedback #
References (2 minimum)
Medical clearance
Qualification verification
Identity verification
POCA / POVA / List 99 confirmation #
Conviction declaration / Rehabilitation of Offenders form
CRB information – current (ie < 1 year)
Registration verification #

depending on post

A checklist of all the clearances undertaken should be held on the personnel file as evidence that they have all have been conducted (see appendix 4). For posts in the Education sector, a spreadsheet containing this information for all staff will be required by Ofsted inspectors.

Appointing Manager to be informed of any convictions or 'tip offs' provided by the CRB. Remember a negative CRB check is not necessarily a 'clean bill of health'. It is usual practice to record any details provided by the Criminal Records Bureau in a letter on file, accompanied by a note of any discussion with the applicant and a clear indication of any risk assessment and decision to appoint.

There is no longer separate Department of Health clearance. The Protection of Children Act List and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults lists are covered under the CRB check. Children's Services Department do still carry out a DfES List 99 check for staff working in the Education sector prior to dispatching the CRB form. This should inform the department when people who have worked with young people or vulnerable adults and have been dismissed or resigned in circumstances which suggest the safety or welfare of young people or clients has been put at risk. This carries a health warning, however, as the Council knows of unsuitable people not included on the POCA List¹⁶ POVA List or List 99. This emphasises the critical nature of covering employment backgrounds and undertaking detailed reference searches of applicants. Care should always be exercised in reading references – some of which may be 'agreed' following Employment Tribunal decisions; some may be evasive and not addressing contentious issues; and some may not be from authorised sources. Always seek further information if it is felt questions have not been answered.

Medical clearance. Ensure reference requests detail sickness absence, and that this is provided to Occupational Health alongside job description / person specification and any information disclosed about disability / reasonable adjustments. If references indicate high level of sickness, investigate this. If deciding to appoint, ensure Occupational Health are aware of content of reference before 'clearing' someone as medically fit. Occupational Health should also be considering the suitability of centrally employed teachers in line with DfES guidance 4/99 which advises on the physical and mental suitability to teach.

Any decision to withdraw an offer due to unsatisfactory checks (e.g. references) must be made by the Appointing Manager and the implications cleared via departmental HR (e.g. in case of contractual issues).

Risk Assessment. Where there are gaps in information, concerns or matters of judgement, the Appointing Manager will undertake a risk assessment to determine whether the appointment should proceed or the offer be withdrawn. The Appointing Manager will weigh up the information available and consider whether further information / advice is required, whether the safety risk is small or can be mitigated by temporary work restrictions. Advice from HR should be sought on potential employment rights matters (for example if temporary contract is envisaged).

As a rule of thumb, any risk must be judged by a sense of reasonable action to avoid the risk arising and should be mitigated so it becomes negligible. Generally risks should be avoided, and never be unmanaged.

The Appointing Manager must 'sign off' the documentation and clear the appointment for processing. The Appointing Manager will be held accountable for this decision.

8. Overseas workers

Special care needs to be taken where candidates are from overseas. First consideration needs to link to the duration of work in the UK; i.e. where new arrivals have no track record of relevant employment.

¹⁶ The Department of Health (DOH) or Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) does need to be kept informed of those whose names should be added to the index – HR, in conjunction with the Business Manager or disciplinary panel Chair should undertake this. From October 2009 this role will be taken over by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (www.isa.gov.uk)

Utilise all available avenues to check candidate's background: the CRB website details the availability of criminal records from overseas, the General Social Care Council has a separate registration process for overseas Social Workers.

The CRB also provides an Overseas Information Service, which will provide employers with details of the information that applicants may be able to obtain from their country of origin. This may involve obtaining a translation of the information that comes back.

References: special efforts need to be made to ensure sources are reliable, employment history is break-free or explained, and supplementary references should be obtained in order to produce a proper historical work, training, etc picture.

For potential appointments the Appointing Officer must take care to ensure sufficient breadth and depth of information is available to make a safe decision.

9. Induction

The introduction of a new member of staff to the organisation begins at the recruitment stage, when messages about being a 'Safe Organisation'¹⁷ are first given. Safe organisations build upon this through the selection process and when the new person starts work as part of induction.

Induction ranges from the provision of basic knowledge about HR, conditions of service, health and safety and environmental issues, through to the knowledge, standards and skills required to function effectively in the particular role and service.

Relevant induction materials need to be developed and provided in writing, ideally with a checklist. Induction should be thought about in advance and include clear statements / evidence of the specific safeguarding materials relevant to the particular recruit as relevant to the work s/he will actually do. Induction, work plans and supervision programmes should also be advised by the scores from testing and interview feedback on an individual basis.

The general safeguarding induction pack is likely to comprise relevant information on all the organisations policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, child and adult protection, Internet safety, bullying, discrimination, harassment, Code(s) of Conduct, whistleblowing, disciplinary rules, details of any confidentiality policies, data protection and risk assessment.

Additionally, specific organisational standards, service handbooks and service specific rules may be relevant, including guidance on boundaries, intimate care, physical intervention, drugs, alcohol, best practice guidelines; procedures for reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations. Those working in multi-agency teams may need to be aware of partner organisations operating procedures and rules.

Generally, managers need to ensure there are good induction systems and ongoing training / updates / CPD for staff (and others) in (at least) minimum standards in child / adult protection. There needs to be clear access to guidance and procedures for child and adult protection and awareness of local protocols and systems for information sharing and referral.

Training for all people involved in recruitment and selection is essential before they can practice. Training needs for all new starters need to be established and actioned.

As part of induction a clear job / role description must be given which details their responsibilities and highlights all relevant reporting structures and procedures.

¹⁷ Safe Organisation Checklist. Available from www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

Individual supervision, one to one sessions between manager and employee, and appraisal sessions should be diarised.

In front line services there needs to be clear expectations on staff with regard to personal conduct and promoting the well-being of children and adult service users, specifically the behaviour expected of adults who work with children and vulnerable adults. Initially a period of closer supervision / observation or mentoring could be introduced to support the new person.

Overall, managers need to work to develop a safe culture that embraces safeguarding and communicates a clear framework of awareness. This involves providing staff with opportunities to reflect on practice and feel able to self-report and challenge others. Working towards staff thinking 'what if I'm right?' rather than 'what if I'm wrong?'

10. Keeping CRB documents to show inspectors

Guidance from the CRB is to destroy Disclosure documents six months after they are no longer needed; the record of receipt, any decisions, and reference number should be retained (reference number on SAP).

Care Providers need to keep evidence of CRB processes between each CSCI Inspection so that the inspectors can ensure that the service is following correct recruitment procedures.

Details of discussions with staff about criminal or other declarations must be retained on personal files confidentially.

11. Source Documents and Reference Material

A useful tool produced by the Department of Health is a training and resource pack, '**Towards Safer Care**' (TSC), designed to ensure safer selection, management, disciplinary and contracting decisions. The TSC checklists (***attached at Appendix 1***) have been added to bolster internal Council processes and policies. The Checklists provide a good starting point for those wishing to be clear about best practice standards in safe recruitment, selection and management, and managing a workforce increasingly comprising agency staff and other workers employers have traditionally had fewer controls over.

The DfES guidance, 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (1st January 2007), gives detailed advice on safer recruitment and selection in all education settings and advises on dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff. This document pulls together both guidance and statutory duties and must be considered alongside this advice in recruiting to educational settings.

Southwark: Business Managers Handbook (BMH) (Managing People)

Southwark HR Policies and Procedures are found on the intranet in the Business Managers Handbook. This is comprehensive and outlines what should and what should not be done as well as a wealth of guidance to help managers undertake their people management responsibilities. Devolved HR Staff are additionally supported by 'HR Guides', a Quality System and are managed through a professional HR line. Safeguarding in HR awareness sessions need to be held periodically and new learning shared on a case-by-case, need to know basis.

Specific relevant sections of the **Southwark Council Business Managers Handbook** to be read in conjunction with this guide are:

Recruitment procedure

- Section 3.8.2 References
- Section 3.8.3 Medical requirements
- Section 3.8.4 Evidence of Qualification
- Section 3.8.5 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act / Council policy
- Section 3.8.6 Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures
- Section 3.9 Restriction on Employment through citizenship
- Section 4.1 The Contract of Employment
- Section 4.2 Induction, Work-planning and Training

Recruitment tools

- 4.31 Application forms
- 4.51 Police checks
- 4.41 Preparing for the interview
- 4.57 Warner recruitment

Disciplinary Procedure

Code of Conduct

Other significant source documents (available through Health and Social Care or Children's Services HR)

- Personnel Guides to Contracts of Employment / References
- 'Green Book' – NJC for LGS – National Conditions of Service
- Southwark Council Whistleblowing procedure
- Southwark Council Code of Conduct¹⁸ / GSCC Code of Practice¹⁹ / GTC Code of Practice
- 'Choosing with Care' (HSC 1998 212) and Southwark Response to the Warner report
- Support Force for Children's Residential care (SFCRC) Code of Practice
- Personnel Records in Secure Accommodation – SSI 9/00
- Towards Safer Care – Training and Resource Pack
- PCT 'Safer recruitment' A Guide for Recruiting Managers
- DfES Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education (now DCSF)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (DCSF 2006)
- Warner Report: Choosing with Care, 1992
- 'People like us' Sir William Utting, 1997

Staff involved should also be familiar with the key provisions of the Care Standards Act; The 'One stop shop' Disclosure Service – in particular, levels of criminal records checks and the sections relating to the Protection of Children Act List and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List, List 99 / Department of Health checks. Attention is drawn to circumstances warranting referrals to POCA List / POVA List / List 99, post appointment.

From October 2009 the Independent Safeguarding Authority will take over the role of the POCA and POVA Lists and List 99 (www.isa.gov.org.uk).

See also the parallel guidance:

Safer Disciplinary Decisions published by Southwark Council, Southwark Safeguarding Children Board and Southwark Safeguarding Adults Partnership. April 2008

¹⁸ Specific responsibilities for all staff with regards to own conduct and to report where risk of harm to be incorporated into Council Code of Conduct from December 2004

¹⁹ Specific responsibilities for Social Care Workers are set out in GSCC Code of Practice (www.gsc.org.uk)

Towards Safer Care – Human Resources Checklists

These checklists are modified versions of those contained in the 'Towards Safer Care Training Pack', issued by the Department of Health, 1999. They provide a useful aide memoir / self-audit tool to ensure best practice safeguarding standards are met. A clear 'Yes' or positive answer to each point should go some way to ensuring the best possible safeguarding in people management. Any suggestions for improvement should be made through the Departmental HR Manager in the first instance

Checklist: 1 Rules and Whistleblowing

(a) Rules

It is fertile ground for abusers to operate where personal and professional boundaries are not clear: where there is no clarity about what is proper behaviour, discipline and play, and where managers are not vigilant (Leadbetter, Essex Social Services 'Towards Safer Care' interview 1999)

The local authority:

- Has a code of conduct to protect against sexual activity within relationships of trust

The authority has rules on:

- Sleeping in, bed-time night supervision
- Sexuality and personal relationships
- Smoking, alcohol and drugs
- Gift giving and receiving
- Invasive and intimate care including touch and massage
- Employees' relationships with contractors
- A minimum of two staff on duty in children's homes, including nights
- Normal physical contact, as between good parents and their children, but not in private
- Entry into child's room; staff never on own with child with the door closed
- Older children in single rooms able to lock their doors
- Sex education provided only under supervision from senior staff and / or after further training
- Control, restraint and physical contact
- Corporal punishment in foster care
- Addressing and recording bullying
- Prohibiting videos for over 18s in children's homes and access of children under 15 to [15] videos
- Safeguarding children when using the Internet including e-mail
- Ownership and content of photographs of children
- Video games
- Cultural and religious observances
- Sharing of information about children

Children are informed:

- About rules on safety and what is / is not appropriate behaviour

Checklist 1: Rules and Whistleblowing

(b) Whistleblowing

Guidance on when to make a formal complaint:

- Has been given to staff during induction
- Has been given in the code of conduct 'bring to attention....any deficiency in the provision of services to the public'
- Staff have been issued with DCSF booklet 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'
- Has been given to ancillary, temporary or contracted staff and volunteers
- (For social care workers) Is in the GSCC code of practice which emphasises professional duty to report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour / practice or anything that might get in the way of safe care
- Is accompanied by guarantee that this duty can be discharged without prejudice to their position and prospects

Staff:

- Use supervision to raise concerns with their line manager, provided concern is not about line manager
- Are properly supported when raising concerns about misconduct
- Are aware of duty of care and the need to report concerns to the appropriate person

Staff can go outside line management and raise concerns through:

- Whistleblowing procedure
- Trade union
- Independent charity Public Concern at Work

Foster carers:

- Are required to inform Authority when anyone in regular contact with child is interviewed regarding any offence

Authority publishes:

- Annual report on all complaints relating to foster care

Checklist 2: Safer Selection (a) General

The application form:

- Is designed (*or customised*) for work with children
- Asks for full employment history (including part-time to nearest month, including gaps, since leaving full-time education (*Chair to probe gaps at interview*))
- Asks about any family relationship with existing employees or employers
- Asks for any other name the applicant has been known by

The person specification listing the required personal characteristics:

- Is devised by someone suitably trained in selection
- Together with the job description, identifies duty of care / safeguarding requirements
- Identifies the level of CRB check and POVA List, POCA List and List 99 checking – a Council wide matrix of jobs should identify whether Enhanced or Standard
- Tests out the suitability of candidates and
- Indicates how the requirements will be tested during the selection process (e.g. group exercises, personality questionnaire, child abuse inventory, observed discussions)

Rigorous recruitment processes:

- Gaps in employment history / study are routinely checked by interview panels
- Panel chairs take responsibility to identify referees to be approached
- Panel chairs 'sign off' appointment before first day of service arranged
- Offers **not** appointments are 'made subject to'
- Verification of overseas workers suitability: qualifications, criminal records etc.
- Based on the Business Managers Handbook and Personnel Officers Screening Guidelines and DfES guidelines on recruitment and selection

Recruitment processes are as rigorous for:

- Internal transfers to work with children, including Agency, interims, consultants, volunteers or temporary staff
- Staff caring for children with disabilities

Rigorous screening of non-staff personnel with unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults e.g.:

- Volunteers; escort / and transport agencies
- Councillors meeting looked after children
- Students on placement
- Consultants / interims
- Contractors

Agency, bank, consultants, interim or temporary staff:

- Are not used 'frequently or for long periods' (in residential units particularly) without proper safeguarding consideration. The benefits of permanency should be promoted
- Are engaged through Commensura. The agency will need to confirm in writing that it has undertaken the necessary pre employment checks (references, medical, CRB, right to work, qualification – all as appropriate)
- Understand their responsibilities in line with the code of conduct
- Understand the need to inform the agency of any convictions or investigations before and during the engagement with the Council
- Know how to whistle blow / highlight concerns about children / vulnerable adults

Checklist 2: Safer Selection (b) Information for applicants

Applicants are advised that:

- The Council reserves right to approach current and any previous employer
- The Council has a policy on the recruitment of ex offenders
- The Council has an offender aware culture and operates rigorous screening processes
- Current and previous employers will be asked about disciplinary offences, including *expired offences (where Warner applicable e.g. residential units and all Education settings)*
- Where a post is exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act all convictions must be listed, with dates. Explanations will be sought and some convictions will debar employment, **these will be agreed with the Council's Head of Human Resources and should not be open to local change.** In Education, applicants are asked to sign a statement declaring they are not on List 99 or debarred
- The level of Criminal Records Bureau check that will be made
- Providing false information makes them liable to summary dismissal
- Failure to declare conviction, caution or pending police action disqualifies them from employment
- Further CRB checks may be carried out as and when required
- They will participate in group exercises – *where selection process determines*
- They will participate in written exercises – *where selection process determines*
- Young people in care meet and give their views on applicants – *where selection process determines*
- Personal interviews explore candidate's attitudes – *where selection process determines*
- Appointments are not made 'subject to references' or before CRB checks
- There is no unsupervised access to children until all checks are completed satisfactorily – *we do not start staff on 'waivers'*
- Social Worker contracts are conditional upon (continuing) registration with the General Social Care Council and Teachers upon continuing registration with GTC
- Social Care Workers meeting the standards defined in the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers
- Employment does not start until Personnel Officer confirms in writing that all checks have been made and cleared

Checklist 2: Safer Selection (c) References and Checks

Employer referees are:

- Sent a standard pro forma (can be customised (*as promoted by Warner*) – for specific jobs to address criteria as defined in person specification)
- Sent job description and person specification
- Asked to comment on applicant's weaknesses / strengths in relation to needs of post
- Asked about performance history
- Asked about disciplinary offences, *including expired offences – where Warner applies and in all posts covered by the DfES guidance on recruitment and selection*
- Advised about their legal liability for references, that reference should contain no material misstatement or omission

References are:

- Verified by follow up phone calls (*where Business Manager determines*) and a written record is made and retained
- Sought for internal candidates
- Followed up and read (*before the Warner interview*) and 'signed off' by manager identified as responsible for the appointment

Checks are made:

- To verify identity of the applicant through birth certificate or passport

- To verify education qualifications
- To verify professional qualifications
- To verify professional registration e.g. GSCC Social Workers and GTC Teachers
- With police records (CRB check)
- With the Department of Health Consultancy Index and DFEE List 99 (CRB check)
- Of social services' records of Schedule One offenders (CRB check)
- Of Disqualification for Caring for Children Regulations 1991 records (CRB check)
- Comparing employment and superannuation records
- The authority co-ordinates police checks across social services, education, leisure departments and voluntary groups
- If previous unit of employment has closed, registration and inspection unit is asked whether there were concerns (*Residential posts*)
- Appointment of applicant with prior criminal record is decided by a senior nominated officer (SMT member)

Checklist 3: Safer Contracting

A clear contract is at the heart of good social work practice for developing secure futures for children. Contracting arrangements should provide more scope for rigorous monitoring of quality (Warner 6.56, 6.60)

People and organisations paying for services should satisfy themselves that those services keep children safe (Utting 1.21)

Local Authorities and schools should ensure that the terms of any contract that requires the contractor to employ staff to work with, or provide services for, children for whom the school is responsible, also requires the contractor to adopt and implement the measures described in this guidance. (DfES guidance 1568/2005)

Authority:

- Has agreed detailed service standards to assess the quality of independent provision
- Has formal contracts for services to agreed standards
- Has approved providers lists, rather than spot purchasing external placements
- Checks with other departments which have used placements, especially when made in an emergency
- Checks approval status of foster carers working for independent agencies

Authority requires agency to implement compatible policies and procedures:

- Regarding equally rigorous selection procedures
- Ensuring protection from abuse, bullying and intimidation
- Concerning control and physical restraint
- Regarding grievance / complaint / whistleblowing procedures for staff, children and their relatives
- In respect of induction, support, supervision and training
- On arrangements for emergency cover
- For gift giving and receiving between staff and children
- For responding to allegations of abuse or neglect by foster carers
- Keeping a record of visitors to home, who are accompanied unless known to child
- Appropriate touch
- Safeguards regarding special relationships and control of confidential information including photographs

Agencies:

- Accept full responsibility for staff they provide
- Are not used to fill vacancies for heads of homes

- Adhere to Regulation 22 of the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003

Checklist 4: Safer management (a)

A protective strategy includes management, which pursues overall excellence and is vigilant in protecting children and in exposing abuse. Safety is a function of overall effectiveness (Utting p 1, 2.1)

Policy:

- A child impact analysis is required for all proposed policy or practice changes
- Aims and objectives, used to develop job descriptions, are up to date

Placements:

- Consider safety / risk for child and carers
- Match children to ensure staff are not expected to act beyond their competence

Induction:

- Staff receive structured training before having unsupervised access to children
- Covers whistleblowing, standards, rules, code of conduct and all safeguarding expectations, to include appropriate use of boundaries

Supervision:

- Planned and formal – takes place between staff and line managers at agreed intervals and in accordance with any agreement, contract, policy
- Outcomes are agreed and recorded
- Managers at the next level monitor the recording of sessions
- Only personnel with an appropriate need to know have access to confidential and sensitive information about children in care
- Ongoing training must comply with statutory requirements for the particular post

Checklist 4: Safer management (b)

The organisation has procedures concerning:

- Consistent monitoring of local authority, voluntary and private homes
- Regular reviews of disciplinary measures
- Giving parents full information about arrangements for keeping children safe e.g. recruitment procedures, codes of conduct, discipline and control
- Checking before placement on the significance of physical contact for children, in relation to their past history
- Retention of staff's signed copy of prohibited measures on personnel file
- Monitoring of critical incidents

Internal audits (including file audits) ensure:

- Compliance with recruitment procedures
- Consistency so that local or team practice does not supersede official procedures
- Police checks are made

When a post becomes vacant:

- Inspection process looks at staff turnover and reasons for leaving
- The Personnel Officer conducts an exit interview and issues Leaver survey
- The job description and person specification are reviewed
- If the employee left as a result of a disciplinary matter consideration should be given to referral to the appropriate registration body and for to the appropriate body for consideration of inclusion on List 99 / POVA List / POCA List, any decision relating to this must be fully recorded by the appropriate Manager following advice from HR advisers

Questions to ask yourself at different stages

CRB Check

Would the offence influence their work with the client group?
 Is it complete?
 Nature of offence?
 Age at which offences committed – time since last offence?
 Frequency of offending?
 Attitude to offending?
 Consider references – is the person viewed as honest? May seek further references
 Generally any offences against the person – NOT appointable
 Schedule 1 offence – NOT appointable
 Consider attitudes to control, punishment
 Convictions to SMT – with appointing manager risk assessment

Medical

More than 10 days (not pregnancy or DDA related). May not be appointed – management discretion following proper consideration of all relevant factors including DDA
 Panel **must** consider issues of disability and job design to ensure no unlawful discrimination
 Explore reasons with the candidate
 Look at past record of sickness
 Seek information from Occupational Health
 Check reference regarding past sickness – send information to Occupational Health
 Full medical should be conducted
 Past physical problems must be considered in relation to the post and where relevant to the post

Gaps in Employment

May be indicators of other things – disciplinaries, dismissal, offending, and lack of commitment, health issues. Must be explored in depth. May lead to other references being sought
 Ask direct questions e.g.
 Were you sacked?
 Did you have more than one job during the period you have listed as employed?
 Where were you during the year not accounted for in your employment record etc?
 Do you have references to cover gaps?
 Do you have a passport stamp to show you were travelling?
 Verbal comments from referee must be recorded and included in feedback to panel chair

Formal Interview – Additional Clarification

The formal interview may indicate areas of weakness or inconsistency. This must be notified to the Warner panel and followed up
 Consider 2nd interview
 High score in tests, low score in interview. Why? For example:
 Weaknesses in equal opportunities: say attitudes to certain offences / certain groups in society must be rigorously explored
 Agree model answers in advance of the interview; remember this is a guide
 Record prompts
 Do not ask closed or leading questions but ensure candidates get a good opportunity to expand answers
 Where possible use competency guides to frame questions which will identify both desired and non-desired responses / characteristics
 Is the candidate able to discuss personal issues including probing questions of an intimate nature, which they may be exploring with clients, if not is their explanation in keeping with the job requirements?

Assessment Centre Scores

Must be considered particularly in relation to other areas

Literacy – good application poor score in literacy – did they complete their own form?

Their view about the exercises and the tests if all candidates poor but score well in other areas

A grid containing assessment scores, application details and scores from interview must be completed

Ensure all panels are uniform in their approach

Wherever possible a practical test **must** be employed

References – Questions

Look for unsubstantiated or non-qualified statements i.e. listings of tasks. If it does not say how well they have done, ask referee

Did the named / correct person provide the reference – are they authorised?

Check sickness, disciplinarys, negative or neutral statements

What is the statement about convictions? / CRB check

Check have they actually worked in capacity stated – those they say they have – make sure the form is explicit

Do not ignore any clues. Cross reference with application form and stated experience

Check where someone says 'I worked for Camp America', it was not in an administrative capacity

Can the agency verify positive testimonials from placements?

Be wary of post box addresses and always get a reference from their last employer. Be wary of career changes. Be wary of long periods of travel

Telephone or write for additional information if what you have is not adequate

Headed paper? Is it an 'agreed' reference?

Risk assessment / decision

Ensure all possible information is compiled and mandatory checks have been undertaken

Where concerns arise, do not give 'benefit of doubt'

Seek further information / references where this may lead to a better informed judgement (not a delaying tactic)

Seek specialist advice if in doubt; consider whether adjustments are feasible during a trial period

Any arrangements must be temporary whilst further information obtained

Clear any contentious issues (e.g. CRB) up the line

New learning must be coordinated and shared by the HR Sub Group to all stakeholders

AGENCY WORKERS (general rules) – Strengthening Safeguards through Regulations

Recruitment, employment agencies and businesses are governed by the Employment Agencies Act 1973. Since 6 April 2004 the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations identified new rules, of which, the main points to note from a safeguarding perspective are:

Terms and conditions of the contract

Before providing any services to the hirer, the agency or business must agree the terms that will apply, including:

- Amount or method of calculating fees
- Whether any refunds or rebates are payable
- In the case of an employment business, details of the procedure to be followed if the worker proves unsatisfactory

Information to be obtained from the hirer

An agency or business must not introduce or supply workers to a hirer unless it has first obtained 'sufficient information from the hirer to select a suitable work-seeker for the position which the hirer seeks to fill' including:

- The identity and nature of the hirer's business
- The required start date and the duration, or likely duration, of the work
- Details of the job, including the type of work required, the place and hours of work, any known health and safety risks, and what steps the hirer has taken to prevent or control such risks
- The experience, training, qualifications and any authorisation thought necessary by the hirer (or required by law or a professional body)
- Any expenses payable by or to the worker

Information to be given to the hirer

A worker must not be supplied or introduced to a hirer unless the agency or business has confirmed:

- The identity of the worker
- That the worker has the experience, training, qualifications and any other authorisation necessary to do the job
- That the worker is willing to work in the position offered

When an agency or business proposes a worker to the hirer, it must give the hirer all the above information, and an employment business must also give the hirer the same information it has given the worker as to his or her employment status with the business

Checking workers' credentials

Where a worker is:

- Required by law or a professional body to have any qualifications or authorisation to work in the relevant job; or
- Will be working with or caring for one or more under-18 year-olds; or
- Will be working in a job caring for or attending someone in need of care or attention (by reason of age, infirmity or any other circumstances), then the agency or business must also:
- Obtain copies of any relevant qualifications or authorisations and provide copies for the hiring agency;

- Obtain two references from non-relatives and provide copies for the hiring agency; and
- Take all other reasonably practicable steps to confirm that the worker is not unsuitable for the job.

NB: if an agency or business has taken all reasonable steps to fulfil these requirements but has been unable to do so fully, it must inform the hirer of those facts and tell them what steps have been taken.

Acting on information obtained

Where an employment business receives or obtains information that gives it reasonable grounds to believe that the worker is unsuitable for the job he or she is doing, it must without delay inform the hirer and end the placement.

If an employment business receives information that indicates the worker's unsuitability, but there are no reasonable grounds to believe this is correct, it must still inform the hirer of the information received.

However, the business must then make reasonable enquiries as to the worker's suitability and inform the hirer of any information it receives or obtains. If the enquiries give reasonable grounds for believing the information received, then the hirer must be informed and the placement ended.

Note: Agencies supplying **nurses and some care workers** are subject to *additional* special rules introduced by the Care Standards Act 2002: the Nurses Agencies Regulations 2002 and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002.

Managers in those services need to take account of the requirements of those pieces of statute in the employment of such staff.

For Southwark Council, all agency staff assignments must be made via Comensura who undertake standard protocols for the Council and ensure appropriate checks and clearances are obtained and that documentary evidence is available before placements occur. Any exceptions to this require a clear risk assessment to be undertaken and cleared by a responsible manager prior to assignment (including restrictions on activity pending further clearances).

NEW STARTER CHECKLIST (RETAIN INSIDE COVER OF PERSONAL FILE)

NAME		JOB TITLE	
PAYROLL NO.		RESPONSIBLE MANAGER	

RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST	INITIALS	DATE
APPLICATION FORM		
GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT COVERED ²⁰		
JOB DESCRIPTION		
PERSON SPECIFICATION		
COPY OF ADVERT		
INTERVIEW LETTER		
OCCUPATIONAL TESTING RESULTS ²¹		
WARNER INTERVIEW (IF APPLICABLE)		
INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SHEETS		
INTERVIEW DECISION SHEET – CHAIR SIGNATORY (AUTHORITY TO APPOINT)		
BUSINESS CASE FOR SALARY (WHERE APPLICABLE)		

STARTER CHECKLIST	SENT	DATE	RECEIVED	DATE
OFFER LETTER				
JOB ACCEPTANCE LETTER				
REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS				
CRB CHECK / POCA / POVA (REFERENCE RECORDED)				
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLEARANCE				
REFERENCE 1 MANAGER TO INITIAL ORIGINAL				
REFERENCE 2 MANAGER TO INITIAL ORIGINAL				
REFERENCE 3 (IF REQUIRED)				
MANAGER SIGN OFF OF ALL REFS				
IDENTITY CHECKED (COPY TO FILE)				
RIGHT TO WORK CHECKED (COPY TO FILE)				
ORIGINAL QUALIFICATIONS SEEN (COPY TO FILE)				
PROF. REGISTRATION VERIFIED (COPY TO FILE)				
SAP INPUT OF PROF. REGISTRATION				

	NAME	DATE
DECLARED CONVICTIONS (SMT SIGN OFF)		
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER SIGN OFF OF ALL CLEARANCES (BEFORE START DATE AGREED)		
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER RISK ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN ²²		
START DATE AGREED		
CONTRACT ISSUED BEFORE FDS		
INTEGRATED INDUCTION BOOKED		

²⁰ Chair Sheet or Original Application noted to cover reasons for gaps

²¹ Yes / No – if follow up required in Learning and Development Plan

²² Manager to sign full Risk Assessment undertaken where agreement to start without full clearances

Human Resources Responsibilities

Checklist:

- Verify identity of applicant / starter through birth certificate or passport
- Verify interviewee and person starting at HQ and Unit are the same (handwriting / photo / greeting meeting) photo ID must be either a passport or Drivers Licence
- Verify qualifications
- Check CRB records
- Where the Business Manager authorises it, check Social Services records where applicant lives / has lived, including records of Schedule One Offenders (SSI 1998) (this will require enlisting the help of Quality Assurance Unit as at present only they can do this)
- Check of Disqualification for Caring for Children's Regulations / DfES regulations
- Compare superannuation and employment records
- Compare references against application form
- If previous unit of employment has closed ask registration and inspection whether there were concerns
- Appointment of Applicant with criminal record: explanation and conviction information to be passed through Divisional HR to SMT

Final checks / actions post Warner Interview and final checks / actions other posts

HR will ensure all documents are complete and refer to Appointing Manager to approve all appointments (as detailed above).

Contract to be drawn up by HR and sent out in accordance with defined service standards. Any early **offer** of employment must be made subject to the relevant checks. The use of waivers is not acceptable under any circumstances, unless explicitly agreed to by the Appointing Manager following a risk assessment.

Before the candidate starts they should be informed of the need to provide Birth Certificate, Passport, Proof of qualifications; Right to work, National Insurance Number, P45, proof of address, named utility bill, Driving Licence (where relevant), Birth Certificate, marriage certificate, (HR will identify what is applicable and ensure all documentation to be originals). Copies of documents should be retained on file and checklist form completed and signed.

April 2008

For further information or advice within Southwark Council, speak to your Departmental HR Advisor.

For advice on safeguarding or safeguarding training, you can also contact the SSCB or SAP:

Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)
Tel: 020 7525 3306
Fax: 020 7525 3328
Email: sscb@southwark.gov.uk
Website: www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

Southwark Safeguarding Adults Partnership (SAP)
Tel: 020 7525 1754
Fax: 020 7525 3564
Email: safeguardingadultscoordinator@southwark.gov.uk
Website: www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingadults

Safe Organisation Checklist

Protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm

A safe organisation:

Ensures that its governing body, all of its employees, commissioned or contracted agents and volunteers or adult participants are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

This is done through:

- ✓ Safe recruitment/selection practice (including but not only rigorous checking of applications, CVs, references and appropriate CRB checks) – including the training of those who recruit staff to work with children or vulnerable adults
- ✓ Clear expectations on staff with regard to personal conduct and promoting the well-being of children and adult service users
- ✓ Good induction systems and ongoing training/updates for staff (and others) in minimum standards in child protection, even where the primary service users are adults who are parents (not children)
- ✓ Clear access to guidance / procedures for child protection and protection of vulnerable adults and awareness of local protocols and systems for information sharing and referral
- ✓ Listening to the concerns of service users especially children, their parents, and vulnerable adults with an open mind and promotion to service users of a policy/culture of safeguarding children and the vulnerable as paramount
- ✓ Good supervision of staff/volunteers
- ✓ Clear and accessible complaints and whistle-blowing procedures
- ✓ Adherence to agreed local procedures for investigating allegations of harm to children or vulnerable adults by persons in positions of trust - including independent advice and referral to the police as necessary
- ✓ Good record keeping (including decision-making about concerns / allegations) and database systems
- ✓ A formal and independent review process for learning from serious untoward incidents with regard to abuse of children or adults by those in a position of trust
- ✓ Regular audits of the above to ensure compliance
- ✓ Leadership/accountability in a named senior manager and clear access to specialist advice about child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults (externally if not available within the organisation)