

Safeguarding - Interview Questions

Guide for managers

Interview questions to address suitable personal behaviours for applicants applying to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults

Introduction

Once you have established your recruitment panel, one of the first jobs after the shortlisting process is to agree the interview questions. These questions will be generic to ensure you ask each applicant to evidence their suitability to undertake the requirements of the post. However it is important to remember that you can ask follow on supplementary questions which may arise from the applicant's answers to your questions or related to information provided on their application form. Where possible it is best to avoid hypothetical questions because they allow theoretical answers. It is better to ask competence based questions that ask an applicant to relate how they have responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test an applicant's attitudes and understanding of issues.

Where a post has access to children, young people or vulnerable adults and assessed by the Council as a 'safeguarding' role, you will also need to investigate their suitability in this area. These posts also require a Disclosure and Barring Scheme check

This guidance provides some example questions, taken from the National College of School Leadership Safer Recruitment Workshop, you might want to ask in these circumstances. They are primarily for safeguarding children, but some could be adapted for use when recruiting to posts relating to care for vulnerable adults.

This guide is not a substitute for Safer Recruitment Training. If you are involved in recruiting to posts with a safeguarding element, you are advised to attend the safer recruitment training.

Behaviours/competences	Positive responses	Negative responses
<p>Motivations for working with children/vulnerable adults</p> <p>Self-awareness/knowledge and understanding of self and professional role.</p> <p>Example questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do you feel are the main drivers which led you to want to work with children/vulnerable adults? ▪ What do you have to offer in support of children/vulnerable adults? ▪ How do you motivate children/vulnerable adults? ▪ What has working with young people/vulnerable adults taught you about yourself? ▪ In relation to working with children/vulnerable adults, what do you consider to be your strengths/areas for improvement? ▪ Can you give an example of how children/vulnerable adults have 	<p>Well thought out and expressed reasons for working with the client group.</p> <p>Convincing responses based on balanced understanding of self and circumstance.</p> <p>Has a realistic knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>A realistic appreciation of the challenges involved in working with children and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Good examples given with sound reasons for actions</p>	<p>Unconvincing responses based on unclear or theoretical examples.</p> <p>Not self-aware, do not see themselves as others do.</p> <p>Driven by personal needs not needs of others.</p> <p>Not realistic about personal strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Unrealistic impression of what working with children is really like.</p> <p>Pushed by others, or forced by circumstance, to do something they do not appear to have personally thought through.</p>

Behaviours/competences	Positive responses	Negative responses
benefited from contact with you?		
<p>Emotional Maturity & Resilience</p> <p>Consistency under pressure, ability to use authority and respond appropriately, ability to seek assistance/support where necessary.</p> <p>Example questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me about a time when you have been working with children/vulnerable adults and your authority was seriously challenged. ▪ How did you react and how did you manage the situation? ▪ What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? ▪ Tell me about a person you have had particular difficulty dealing with. ▪ What made it difficult? ▪ How did you manage the situation? 	<p>Behaves consistently and appropriately under pressure or in a position of authority.</p> <p>Has control over emotions when dealing with adults and children.</p> <p>Understands power position and how to seek help in difficult circumstances</p> <p>Effective action identified and taken when concerns raised about a colleague's practice.</p>	<p>Inappropriate responses when under pressure or when in a position of power.</p> <p>Inconsistent responses.</p> <p>Handles conflict badly.</p> <p>Fails to control temper/emotions with children and or adults.</p> <p>Fails to identify when help or action is needed and fails to seek support and advice.</p>

Behaviours/competences	Positive responses	Negative responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you ever felt uncomfortable about a colleague's behaviour towards children in a previous job? What were your concerns, what did you do, and how was the issue resolved? 		
<p>Values & Ethics</p> <p>Ability to build and sustain professional standards and relationships</p> <p>Ability to understand and respect other people's opinions.</p> <p>Ability to contribute towards creating a safe and protective environment.</p> <p>Example questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your attitudes to child protection/safeguarding adults? How have these developed over time? ▪ Tell me about a time when a child or vulnerable adult behaved in a way that caused you concern. How did you deal with that? Who else did you involve? ▪ What are your feelings about children 	<p>Demonstrates a balanced understanding of right and wrong.</p> <p>Puts the client first.</p> <p>Is aware of the realities of abuse.</p> <p>Prepared to believe the client.</p> <p>Shows a contemplative approach, drawing on personal experiences & lessons from others.</p> <p>Builds values & judgements based on new information.</p> <p>Shows a balanced understanding of risk and can identify the appropriate course of action</p> <p>Shows an appreciation of safeguarding issues and an ability and responsibility to contribute towards a protective</p>	<p>Extreme opinions which don't account for the views/feelings of others.</p> <p>Fails to show balance in opinion.</p> <p>Does not build on new information or understanding.</p> <p>Demonstrates hardened opinion not adjusted to circumstances</p> <p>Does not show a full or rounded appreciation of safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Dismissive of, or underplays, the risks.</p> <p>Consistently puts the blame and responsibility for child protection/safeguarding adults elsewhere.</p> <p>Fails to believe in suspicions/reports of abuse.</p>

Behaviours/competences	Positive responses	Negative responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ or adults who make allegations against staff? ▪ How do you feel when someone holds an opinion which differs from your own? How do you behave in this situation? ▪ Have you ever had concerns about a colleague's ability to work with children/vulnerable adults? How did you deal with this? ▪ How can you personally support the Council's safeguarding agenda? ▪ Can you give me some examples of how you would contribute to making the service/organisation a safer environment for children/vulnerable adults? ▪ Bullying is often a serious issue which has to be dealt with in all areas of work with children. In your experience what is the best way to deal with it? Can you give an example of how you have tackled this in the past? 	<p>environment.</p> <p>Shows respect for others feelings, views and circumstances.</p>	

Other additional questions or follow up action at interview:

If there are any gaps in the applicant's employment history this should be explored.

If the status of the referee is unclear on the application form (i.e. not clear if this is the applicant's previous line manager) or if a previous employer has not been asked to provide a reference an explanation should be sought from the applicant.

If there are any concerns or discrepancies arising from information provided by the applicant (application form, answers to questions) these should be explored.

The applicant should be asked if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirements for a DBS disclosure

If references are not available at the time of the interview, the applicant should also be asked at interview if there is anything s/he wishes to declare or discuss prior to the Council seeking information from their referees.

For further advice and support on any aspect of the interview process, please contact HR