

A guide to recruiting well for early years and childcare

Guidance on effective recruitment and induction in early years and childcare settings.

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A guide to recruiting well for early years and childcare from recruitment to the end of induction.

What is this guide?

This guide aims to support you through the recruitment and induction process. It supports other resources, such as:

- [All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare \(AWIF\)](#)
- [All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare workbooks](#)
- [All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare progress logs](#)
- [How to carry out effective supervision](#)
- [Continuous Professional Development \(CPD\) principles for the early years and childcare workforce in Wales](#)
- [Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework](#).

The guide is also available here as an interactive resource.

[A guide to recruiting well for early years and childcare](#)

PDF 722KB

Who is the guide for?

You may find this resource helpful if you are:

- a manager, leader or supervisor of a childcare, play or early years setting
- a registered person

- a responsible individual
- a trustee
- a headteacher
- thinking about moving up to a management role.

Recruiting and inducting well

The Welsh Government's aim is to develop a highly skilled childcare and play workforce that's seen as a professional workforce and a career of choice. It wants to bring people into the early years and childcare sector with the right skills and behaviours to offer high-quality care, education and play opportunities for children.

The [National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years](#) and the Welsh Government's [Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan 2017](#) explain why it is important to have a planned and well-thought out induction and recruitment programme.

It is the 'registered person' (namely the registered childminder or registered day care provider) who is responsible for making sure the provision complies with the National Minimum Standards and the associated regulations.

Guidance to support the recruitment and selection process

What is safe recruitment?

As an employer, it's important you develop positive and safe recruitment and selection processes to protect:

- children from possible harm
- the organisation from possible complaints or claims of discrimination (applicants can claim damages for discrimination if you don't meet the legal requirements)
- the setting from the effects of poorly managed and/or inappropriate recruitment
- applicants from applying for (and perhaps getting) an unsuitable post.

The aim of safe recruitment is to make sure you successfully and professionally recruit and keep the best people for the job.

Values-based recruitment

Values-based recruitment helps you as an employer attract and recruit workers whose values and behaviours match your workplace or setting.

You can read more about [values-based recruitment](#) here.

[WeCare Wales](#) also has resources to support you in using a values-based approach.

When recruiting new staff members, you should make sure your workers match the diversity of the society and communities you live in. You should also proactively look for and recruit Welsh speaking workers.

Resources

You may find these resources helpful with your recruitment:

- [WeCare Wales jobs portal](#)
- [A Question of Care](#)
- [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(ACAS\)](#)
- [support for employers in recruiting Welsh speaking staff](#)

- [values-based recruitment](#).

The recruitment and selection process

The first stage in the recruitment process is to gather information, such as:

- what does your current staffing structure and team look like?
- do you have any skills gaps among your staff, such as Welsh language?
- what are the qualifications and skills needed to meet the job needs to fit into the current staff team (for example, apprenticeship)?

Important

You should plan your recruitment and selection processes carefully and make sure:

- you have the minimum number of staff employed to meet adult:child ratios (you can find the ratios in NMS Standard 15)
- you have the percentage of qualified staff that is required by law (you can find more information about this in NMS Standard 13)
- you have staff with the required qualifications and qualification level to meet the National Minimum Standards for Childcare based on the Child Minding and Day Care Regulations (Wales) Order 2016 (you can check the required qualifications and qualification levels in the [qualification framework](#))
- everyone you employ is suitable to work with children – anyone who wishes to work with children must complete an [Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) check
- the process is fair, open, honest and does not discriminate
- you involve children and young people wherever possible during the recruitment process.

You can stay up-to-date with the best recruitment practice by getting advice from:

- umbrella organisations and local authorities
- national organisations that offer free advice, such as ACAS.

Planning

During the planning phase, you will need to:

- create or update (if needed) the job description, person specification and terms and conditions
- decide the salary – you must by law pay the [National Minimum Wage](#) or [apprenticeship](#) wage. [Find more information about wage rates](#)
- decide where to advertise to reach possible applicants and get a good response – you may want to think about posting your advert to the [WeCare Wales jobs portal](#)
- ask a suitable person to deal with enquiries about the role
- develop or update a shortlisting and scoring process
- decide who will be on the interview panel and who will lead the interview.

Job advertisement

A good advert includes:

- the job title and role
- the company name and the contact details of the person responsible for the role
- the place of work, hours, rate of pay and whether the role is fixed term or permanent
- the qualifications, skills and experience required

- the legal requirement for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- the closing date and interview date (if possible)
- where applicants should send their application or CV.

Job description and person specification

The job description and person specification should outline the main duties and responsibilities of the job being advertised.

A job description needs to include:

- the job title
- summary of the job purpose
- duties and main responsibilities
- salary or pay scale
- contracted working hours
- if the role is fixed term, the date the contract ends.

A person specification describes the personal qualities needed in a potential worker – the values, skills, experience and knowledge an applicant must have. The specification should match the job description and create the basis for the recruitment process.

When you are putting together the person specification, you should:

- review the skills, knowledge and qualities of your current workers – are there any gaps such as qualification levels and diversity within the team?
- make sure it does not discriminate against those who have [protected characteristics](#), who may be looking to work part-time, those who do not have English as their first language
- identify the essential and desirable criteria for the role (this is explained below)

- ask for two references – one must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer.

'Essential criteria' are the skills the applicant must have.

'Desirable criteria' are the extra skills you would like the applicant to have.

All criteria must:

- be linked to the role
- not discriminate.

Application form and CV

Application form

This allows you to get all the information you need to shortlist those who have applied for the job.

The application form should ask if an applicant needs any reasonable adjustments on the grounds of disability. This information should not be shared with the panel before shortlisting.

CV

Alternatively, you could ask the applicants for a CV. You may want to ask the applicant to write a covering letter with a CV explaining how they match the job description and person specification.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting is an important process that finds the most suitable candidates to interview. To make sure the shortlisting process is as fair and robust as possible, you should:

- make sure more than one person is involved in the shortlisting
- use a scoring matrix and compare the information provided by the applicant with the person specification
- agree a maximum number of people to interview – we suggest five or six at most.

Once you've agreed the shortlist, you're ready to invite the successful applicants to interview.

Invite to interview

When you're inviting the shortlisted candidates to interview, you should make sure the invite includes:

- the time, date and location of the interview
- any useful information, such as parking
- information about the interview process
- asking the applicant if they have any reasonable adjustment requirements for the interview – an [Access to Work grant](#) will cover any practical costs for interviewing or employing a disabled person, for example, paying for communication support.
- asking the applicants to bring any relevant qualification certificates and certificates of attendance at training events
- who the candidates should contact to confirm their attendance and who they can go to if they need any other information.

Interview

Developing interview questions

Here are some things to think about when developing interview questions:

- use the job description to create your questions – good interview questions will allow the person asking questions to find out about the applicant's skills, knowledge and experience
- your questions should be clear and you should avoid stereotypes and bias
- make sure the questions are the same for all applicants and you don't discriminate, for example, don't ask female applicants different questions to male applicants. This will help make sure the process is fair and it will help make scoring easier.

Interview process

The interview can be interview only, where a panel asks the applicant questions, or it can include a practical part, where the candidate takes part in an activity.

The practical interview

When looking for the right worker, you may want to ask the applicant to prepare and do an activity with the children in your setting. You may also ask the applicant to spend a couple of hours in the setting to get a feel of what the job is like while senior workers watch how they interact with the children.

This practical part should be planned with care and scored. If you have any disabled applicants, you should adjust the process to make sure they are not disadvantaged.

The benefits of having a practical part to the interview are:

- you can watch the applicant interacting with the children
- you can consider the children's responses to the applicant
- the applicant can get a feel for their possible workplace
- your current workers and children can meet and talk with the applicants.

The formal interview

Usually an interview panel is made up of:

- a chair – the person who is overseeing the interview process and the panel
- panel members – the people who ask the questions (interviewer).

At the start of the interview, the applicant should be introduced to the interview panel, and given information about what is going to happen during the interview and about the organisation. Usually this is done by the chair.

This short time allows the applicant to relax so they can give their best during the interview.

Here are some things you may want to think about:

- Make sure you hold the interviews in a quiet, private place with no interruptions
- make sure the panel have enough copies of the questions and scoring sheets
- write the applicant's answers and give them a score, this will be important if you are challenged about the outcome later on
- be prepared to ask for more information if you need it
- give the applicant a chance to ask questions
- make a note of any extra questions asked during the interview
- if you spot any skills gaps, ask the applicant if they'd be prepared to do more training.

Supporting the applicants

The applicants may be nervous. To help put them at ease before the interview, you should make sure:

- someone is available to welcome them

- they are asked what they want to be called or how they want to be addressed (make sure this information is shared with the panel – if possible)
- check there is space for them to sit and wait
- make sure water or refreshments are available
- try and let them know if the interview is running late
- let them know where the bathroom is.

Involving children and young people

It is good practice to involve children and young people in the interview. If they are included, you should make sure the children are prepared.

Here are some things that may be helpful when you're preparing the children:

- explain the interview process and what they will do – you could hold a mock interview
- let the children know they can share their opinions
- if the children will be asking questions, they may want to write their own questions or write them with their friends.

After the interview

The interview panel needs to be aware that the applicants can ask for access to written documents about them via a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 1998. The panel should remember this when making notes during the interview.

You must make sure you safely keep all the applications and any information created during the recruitment process, following your setting's data protection policy. You should keep any records about the recruitment process for at least

12 months (even for unsuccessful applicants). If you destroy the information too early, you could find it very difficult to defend yourself if you receive any claims of discrimination or unfair treatment during the selection and interview process.

Making a job offer

When you make a job offer, you must make sure the job offer letter includes the terms and conditions by which the successful candidate will be employed. It should also mention any specific things the successful applicant must do, such as:

- having a clear DBS check
- having satisfactory references
- having proof of their qualifications
- proving they can work in the UK
- completing their probationary period to a satisfactory standard.

Induction, including an overview of the All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare (AWIF)

Induction is important for every worker to help them understand the part they play in supporting children in their early years. It helps workers understand and recognise their roles and responsibilities.

You should make sure all new workers have a good induction, whether they are new to early years and childcare or experienced workers. You should also make sure you develop a good induction process for those returning to work, for example, after maternity leave or a period of sickness.

The National Minimum Standards for Childcare

The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for regulated childcare (Standard 13.9) sets out the need for induction. This includes staff receiving training on health and safety (including infection prevention and control) and child protection policies and procedures during their first week of employment.

Why is having a good induction important?

A good induction process makes sure:

- children are better protected from possible harm
- workers fit into the team successfully because they have similar values and skills
- workers are better supported by having a clear structure and strong action plan.

You should not ignore the importance of a planned and well-thought-out induction, and the positive impact it has on the quality of the service provided. A good, well thought-out induction makes sure workers understand the importance of child-centred practice and the values that support work in early years and childcare.

It will help workers settle and become more effective in their role. It will make sure they know what their role is, as well as the limits of the role, and it can help you manage their performance. Giving them a thorough and structured induction, with continuing professional development, can also increase employee job satisfaction and have a positive effect on reducing staff turnover.

Planning a good induction

You should tailor the induction to the worker's needs, depending on their knowledge and skills (see the AWIF for more details).

You may want to use this resource as a guide – alongside your setting's induction process and the [All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare \(AWIF\) resources](#) to help you plan the induction.

By doing this, managers will know and be confident that all your workers have or will have the same knowledge, skills and values. You can also be sure that your staff work in similar ways and use your policies and procedures correctly.

What is the All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare (AWIF)?

The [All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare \(AWIF\)](#) has five sections and they all link to the Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Core qualification:

- Section 1: Principles and values
- Section 2: Health, well-being, learning and development
- Section 3: Professional practice as an early years and childcare worker
- Section 4: Safeguarding children
- Section 5: Health and safety in children's care, learning, development, and play.

Each section:

- lists the early years and childcare principles and values that workers need to demonstrate
- lists the knowledge, understanding and skills that new workers need to evidence during their induction period
- has a progress log to record the evidence gathered by the worker.

The worker should complete all five sections.

Learning methods

A good induction should provide a range of learning methods, which may include:

- [AWIF progress log](#)
- [AWIF workbook](#)
- feedback
- more resources
- reflection exercises
- mentoring by a more experienced worker
- distance learning
- e-learning guided reading
- [structured use of supervision](#)
- taught courses
- shadowing.

The induction should be completed in small steps as you don't want to give the worker too much information at once.

Supporting the learning process

You should support the worker through the induction by giving them an opportunity and time to complete the induction process. The time it takes will be different for everyone depending on their knowledge and experience.

You should make sure the worker has:

- enough time and space to learn and reflect
- encouragement
- additional training or learning opportunities

- any reasonable adjustments arising from disability in place
- support
- regular and appropriate supervision.

The first few weeks

The most important part of the first day is to welcome and make time for the worker. If you can, use a 'buddy' system, where another worker looks after the new person. It can help both develop in confidence.

The first few days or weeks should include:

- a warm welcome for the worker
- introductions to colleagues, children and their families
- reading and completing core policies and procedures, such as safeguarding children, health and safety, confidentiality, and infection prevention and control
- checking identification documents, such as birth certificate, passport or driver's licence
- completing essential paperwork, such as providing HR with details of next of kin and bank details for payroll
- basic health and safety information, such as how to get into the building and the signing in and out process
- explaining the fire and evacuation procedure
- information about the length of any formal induction and any probationary requirements, for example, a six-month probationary period
- line management arrangements
- a tour of the building, including the toilets and staff room
- a general overview of the AWIF

- the organisation's documents and routines, such as a copy of the staff handbook, staff structure and the dress code
- information about policies, regulations and standards, such as the National Minimum Standards.

It is good practice to provide the worker with an induction plan and checklist to make sure you cover all the areas listed above. You should both sign the document and keep it in the worker's file.

What next?

After the worker completes their induction and the AWIF, they should be able to show they have the skills to work safely and professionally with children and their families or carers.

You should encourage and make sure your workers complete regular continuous professional development (CPD) to keep and improve their skills.

[More information about CPD.](#)

Contact us

If you have a question or if you can't find what you are looking for [get in touch with us.](#)