



Clubmark Resource: Safe Recruitment Procedures for those working with Children & Young People

The Risks

The vast majority of volunteers will help out through a genuine desire to see children or their particular organisation develop. Unfortunately, we must face the reality that a small minority of people will join an organisation or club as an opportunity to gain access to children. They will create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children. One important factor in deciding whether behaviour is a risk of abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the adult.

In order to safeguard young people against such risks it is important that organisations should take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children and families by adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers.

If you are dealing with someone new to the club you will need to be rigorous with respect to recruitment procedures, however you need to be sure of all those working with young people, including those who have been members for quite some time. Any existing member who wishes to work with young people will also need to be assessed for their suitability for a role with children.

Easy Rules to Remember

The implementation of thorough recruitment and selection procedures will help to keep children and young people safe within your organisation. Good practice in management and supervision of workers and volunteers after appointment is a further essential safeguard to help keep children/young people safe.

The procedures outlined below are recommended best practice in your organisation. This reduces the risk of someone targeting a club or organisation to gain access to children and/or of 'seasoned' members moving roles.

Sports clubs/organisations should ensure good recruitment procedures for all involved by:

- Insisting that a person applying for any post of responsibility within the club complete the relevant sports application form, verify qualifications, experience and gaps in employment history; person should be provided with a role descriptor.
- Obtaining two references in writing, followed up with personal contact with the reference provider (any request for references should only be sought for preferred applicants);
- Ensuring the individual completes their vetting with either the National Vetting Bureau or Access NI through Hockey Ireland prior to commencement of working with children or vulnerable people.
- Setting a probationary period (six months for staff or long-term volunteers) which can be used to assess the leader's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people.
- Interviewing or meeting the individual either formally or informally. Appoint two club members to meet the applicant who will be able to:



- assess the individual's experience of working with children or young people and knowledge of safeguarding issues;
- assess their commitment to promoting good practice; and
- assess their ability to communicate with children and young people (i.e. be approachable).
- Ensuring the club management committee ratifies appointments.
- Once recruited into the sports club/organisation, all Sports Leaders should be adequately managed and inducted into policies and procedures.
- When storing information in relation to applicants this should be treated as highly sensitive and confidential. It should be kept in a locked cupboard that is accessible only to a nominated officer and a deputy nominated officer.
- Ensuring they have agreed to and signed up to the relevant Code of Conduct for those working with young people.
- Ensuring they have met with club officials and that they understand the role they are taking on. This is especially important if moving from one role to another among different skill sets, ages, genders, etc. Working with young people will have additional responsibilities attached due to their vulnerability.
- Ensuring they give a commitment to complete the necessary safeguarding training.
- Ensuring they understand that supervision is a vital safeguard for the club so they should avoid working alone.
- Ensuring they know who the Children's Officer/Designated Liaison Person within the club is and understand the youth structures of the club/organisation.

Sport relies heavily on the time and commitment given by volunteers and paid staff. Without this, the opportunities for children and young people to participate and learn new skills would not exist. Below are a number of sample forms to aid your club:

- Sample Volunteer/ Coach Application Form
- Sample Confidential Reference Form
- Sample Existing Leaders Information Form