



SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Last reviewed:	October 2025
Next review due:	October 2026

Statement of intent

The Little Firefly is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices. We expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.

Process

The Little Firefly aims to take a planned and structured approach to the recruitment process to ensure we have a consistent approach each time we recruit a new team member.

Summary of the recruitment process

- Define role
- Advertise role
- Receive CVs
- Shortlisting (with at least two people)
- Initial conversation with nursery owner
- Self-disclosure form requested
- On-site trial
- Interview (with at least two people), and ID checks
- Offer roles and reject candidates
- Request references
- DBS and vetting checks
- Onboarding begins: medical questionnaire etc
- Induction

Safer recruitment training

Those responsible for recruiting staff at The Little Firefly will complete Safer Recruitment training and keep updated and refreshed on the training as advised.

Defining the role

The Little Firefly will provide a role description and a person specification. Safeguarding is a key responsibility within all roles.

Advertising the role

When we are promoting available roles, we will reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding children. We will also highlight that positions within The Little Firefly require an enhanced criminal records check. All roles will be widely advertised to attract a wide range of candidates for both paid and volunteer roles.

The applicant information pack

The Little Firefly will send all applicants for roles, whether paid or unpaid/volunteer roles, an applicant information pack. This includes:

- The application form, including recruitment monitoring
- Self disclosure form
- Medical questionnaire
- Reference request pro-forma
- Employee code of conduct
- An overview of our safer recruitment process

When we ask applicants to apply for the role, we only ask them to complete the application form at this stage.

Applications and shortlisting

The nursery owner and nursery setting manager for the advertised role will shortlist the candidates together. Shortlisting should be carried out by at least two people. They should each be clear about what their role involves and should assess each application form according to how well it meets the criteria set out in the person specification.

The Little Firefly will work to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people. We will consider an applicant's personal suitability for the role, including:

- Motivation and suitability to work with children
- Integrity and ability to form and maintain appropriate professional relationships with children
- Looking at emotional resilience when dealing with challenging behaviours and situations.

At the shortlisting stage, we ask shortlisted candidates to complete a self-disclosure form. This gives the candidate the opportunity to tell us confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record. This information will be kept in a secure and confidential location and will be disposed of in line with our data protection policy.

Trials

Shortlisted candidates are invited to attend a trial on site. This consists of two or more hours of working alongside our early years practitioners with the children.

Feedback will be given by staff to the hiring manager.

Interviews

You should assess all applicants on their ability to carry out the role, based on justifiable and objective criteria. Plan a range of selection methods that are clearly related to the person specification.

At least two people should be on the interview panel and you should have a chair. Agree beforehand who is responsible for ensuring all assessments are conducted fairly and candidates are treated equally.

Interviews to recruit people to work with children should always be conducted face-to-face.

Ask candidates in advance whether they have any access requirements for the interview venue and provide what they need. Give an outline of the selection methods you'll be using and ask if they need any special arrangements for these.

Plan your questions in advance. Choose questions that relate to items in the person specification and enable you to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children, their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role.

You should ask each candidate the same questions so that they are all treated equally.

Make notes during the interview. This will form the evidence for assessing each candidate after the interviews are complete. Use a scoring system based on the person specification and follow the same criteria for each candidate.

During the interview candidates should show that they are able to:

- establish and maintain professional boundaries and professional integrity
- establish and maintain relationships with children
- take action to protect a child.

The interview stage is also the first opportunity to check a person's identity so ask them to bring their ID with them.

References

Once interviews have taken place and a candidate has been selected, we will request at least two references from the successful candidate.

In England, the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance for early years providers advises that references should be obtained directly from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and come from a senior person with appropriate authority (DfE, 2025).

DBS and vetting checks

Along with requesting references, the candidate will also be asked to provide details to get an enhanced DBS check. All positions at The Little Firefly are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that applicants are required to disclose details of convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013), and that

the successful applicant will be required to obtain an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

In England, regulated activity with children means carrying out any of the below activities frequently or with intensity (more than three days in a 30 day period or overnight).

- Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; providing advice or guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children.
- Working for a limited range of specified places with the opportunity for contact with children and young people, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises (excluding work done by supervised volunteers).

Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of how often they take place and whether or not they are supervised. These include:

- engaging in intimate or personal care of children.
- health care by, or under the supervision of, a registered health care professional.

At this stage, we will also check

- Birth certificate - and any name changes to also be run through the DBS system
- Right to work in the UK check
- Overseas check (if the candidate has been resident outside of the UK for three months or more over the last five years)

Until a DBS check with The Little Firefly comes back clear, an employee may work at The Little Firefly but will not be allowed to be alone with the children, help with toileting, change nappies or assist with toileting. If a staff member has a DBS check that is not with The Little Firefly, they cannot assist with toileting or nappy changing.

What to do if vetting checks raise concerns?

If vetting comes back with concerns, we will risk assess the situation and determine if the candidate is suitable to work with children, following the guidelines.

Offering the position

When an offer is made, it should be clear that this is subject to satisfactory clearance of all the vetting checks that need to be done.

Induction

All new staff at The Little Firefly participate in an induction process which includes reading and signing our code of conduct, safeguarding children training plus reading and signing our organisational policies and risk assessments (including safeguarding) within the first month of working with us.

Ongoing suitability of staff checks

Staff complete a yearly staff suitability form and DBS checks are regularly updated.

Responding to concerns once an employee has started their role

The Little Firefly will assess the risks and see if the employee is still suitable to work with children. If appropriate the employee will be suspended while an investigation takes place.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

- Role description
- Person specification (manager)
- Person specification (practitioner)
- Safeguarding policy
- Code of conduct
- Applicant information pack

External references:

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