



Fact Sheet CSS5 – Recruitment

The following Child Safe Standard applies to this fact sheet:

Child Safe Standard 5 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Every organisation that provides services to or for children and young people has a responsibility to uphold their rights and keep them safe from harm.

Being a child safe organisation means you are actively managing your staff recruitment and selection processes to identify the most suitable people to work with children and young people.

This fact sheet aims to assist organisations to review and improve child safe practices in staff recruitment.

Stages of Recruitment

At minimum, recruitment processes for staff and volunteers generally include advertising, conducting selection processes, and background checking. To be a child safe organisation, practices that seek to protect the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people should be embedded in all stages of recruitment and selection processes.

Position descriptions and advertising

When reviewing the position description for the position that will be advertised, consideration should be given to the level of involvement that the person in the role will have with children and young people and/or how the nature of the work done in the role will impact children and young people.

Obviously front-line roles that involve direct engagement with children and young people will require explicit statements about responsibilities for upholding the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people. Other roles may have lesser contact with children and young people and these responsibilities may seem more peripheral, albeit that when more thought is given to this, it may not actually be the case.

For example, a person in a policy role may be unlikely to engage directly with children and young people, however, the policies they write are likely to require consideration for the way children and young people may be impacted by decision-making that is undertaken when operationalising the policy. Another example might be a person in a receptionist role who, while not working directly with children and young people, will likely be one of the first contact points for a child or young person entering the service.

Including an explicit statement that indicates the organisation's commitment to child safety as part of your organisational overview will reinforce to potential applicants your standards and expectations of all future employees. An example of this statement is below:

A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

The **[insert organisation name]** is committed to protecting and promoting the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people. We take a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and any actions that contravene the human rights of children and young people.

As part of our commitment to being a child safe organisation, we actively engage with and value children and young people to create environments where their rights, safety, and wellbeing are at the centre of our values and actions. We genuinely promote the cultural safety and inclusion of all children and young people, including by respecting and valuing the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

We strive to create conditions that: reduce barriers for children, young people, and families with diverse needs to reduce the likelihood of discrimination; reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people; increase the likelihood of identifying any harm; and respond promptly to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

Outline the specific skills and knowledge required and the supervision and accountability processes in place.

Develop selection criteria that will support the recruitment panel to identify candidates who can provide examples of *observable behaviours* that demonstrate their skills and experience against the requirements in the role description. You may wish to include a specific requirement to demonstrate an ability and commitment to uphold the child safe standards.

Clearly state the experiences, qualifications, qualities, values, and attributes expected from the successful applicant, including an understanding of cultural safety and child safe work. When advertising positions, it is important to consider what upholding the child safe standards might look like in relation to the requirements of the role.

Candidates applying for positions that involve direct work with children and young people will have mandatory requirements to hold a Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration, and should be able to clearly see how the Standards apply to the position as it is described when advertising.

How the Standards apply to administrative and policy positions may be less clear for potential candidates. Position descriptions should be written in such a way that helps candidates to clearly understand how the Standards apply to the role so that they can demonstrate how their experience is relevant to these requirements when responding to the selection criteria.

Examples of selection criteria for administrative roles:

'As the Human Resources Manager, the successful candidate will develop and review child safety and wellbeing policies, escalate complaints from children, young people and their families in line with the staff Code of Conduct Policy, and provide advice on candidate suitability to recruitment panels.'

'As the Funding Arrangements Officer, the successful candidate will have demonstrated experience in contract management, including the ability to monitor sub-contractor compliance with the organisation's child safe expectations and practices, and prepare documentation that demonstrates the organisation's adherence to the child safe standards when applying for government grant funding.'

Your advertisement should reference your organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Code of Conduct. These should be made available, preferably in child friendly formats, on your website for potential candidates (as well as children, young people, and their families) to read.

Your position description and advertisement should clearly inform applicants that criminal record checks, WWVP registration, and reference checks will be undertaken for successful candidates. You may wish to refer potential applicants [here](#)¹ for more information.

Before proceeding to advertise, it would be timely to think about whether and/or how you might involve a young person in the recruitment and selection process. We have developed a supporting resource to assist you in considering how you might do so. Refer to **Fact Sheet CSS2: Involving children and young people in recruitment activities**.

The selection process

Establishing a panel

Identify suitable people for the selection panel. This should include a mix of people, including at least one with detailed job knowledge, and someone who is skilled in understanding the organisation's child safe practices and responsibilities.

It is good practice, and many organisations already have policies in place, to involve a service user in the selection process. In line with the Child Safe Standards, a service user could be a young person who can contribute through the value of their lived experience. A young person could take a variety of roles in the selection process, depending on how embedded this practice is in your organisation. Some examples of the types of roles that a young person could undertake include being a panel member, scribe, or observer. We have developed a supporting resource that you may like to refer to in considering how to safely and supportively involve children and young people in interview panels.

¹ [Working With Vulnerable People - Access Canberra](#)

Shortlisting

When reviewing applications, look for any inconsistencies in work history, claims that are not readily backed up by the candidate's experience or qualifications, and documentation (including qualifications) that appears to have been altered.

Given current technological advances, candidates may use AI generators to prepare their resume or write job applications. It is therefore important to carefully check that any statements in resumes and/or responses to selection criteria hold true based on the candidate's experience. For example, a red flag should be raised if a candidate claims to have led high performing teams to deliver program outcomes, yet their job history does not indicate they have held a leadership role.

If any red flags are raised during the shortlisting process, it will be critical for the panel to maintain a focus on the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people who use their service when considering the candidate's suitability to be further considered for the role.

Interviewing

During the interview process, use open-ended questions, including behaviourally based questions that explore:

- The applicant's motivation for applying for the role
- Examples that demonstrate their ability to work safely with children and young people
- The applicant's boundaries when working with children and young people.

Listen for any statements that may signal that a candidate does not value learning, accountability in their work, or taking direction. Be alert to candidates who are vague, inconsistent, or evasive in their responses.

If candidates do not provide sufficient detail in their responses, ask for additional information through open-ended clarifying questions.

Having a child or young person on the panel or involved in the interview process could support the panel to observe how the candidate views, values, or engages with children and young people. Be alert to any inconsistencies between a candidate's statements about valuing children and young people, and their attitude or response towards the child or young person in the room.

If any red flags are raised during the interview process, it will be critical for the panel to maintain a focus on the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people who use their service when considering the candidate's suitability for the role. Each panel member should independently and clearly document any concerns they may have, and these should be discussed openly by the panel.

Background checking

Working with Vulnerable People Check (WWVP) and National Police Certificate

In the ACT, the WWVP is a compulsory screening process for anyone engaging in paid or unpaid work with children and young people. For roles that do not involve working directly with children and young people, a National Police Certificate should be conducted. In some cases, successful candidates may require both checks to be undertaken.

More information can be found about the WWVP Scheme [here²](#).

More information can be found about the National Police Certificate [here³](#).

Referees and additional background checks

When conducting referee checks it is important to consider:

- Having more than one panel member conduct the referee checks, to safeguard against bias or superficial inquiry.
- Conducting a minimum of two referee checks on any candidates who have been assessed as suitable, including those that may be placed into a merit pool. This is an important step for merit listed candidates as further background checking will be assumed to have been completed in the event the person is offered a position in your organisation at a later date.
- Referee checks should ideally involve a conversation, which will assist the panel to gain a deeper insight into the candidate knowledge, skills, and personal qualities. It also enables any party (panel or referee) to clarify inconsistencies or concerns. Please note: if the panel has serious concerns about a candidate's suitability, this should preclude the candidate from progressing further in the selection process.

² [Working With Vulnerable People - Access Canberra](#)

³ [Apply for a National Police Certificate | Australian Federal Police](#)

- Referees should be objective and know the candidate well. The views of a referee who has worked with a candidate for only a short period or who has not worked with the candidate for several years may be less reliable in speaking to the candidate's suitability or ability to perform the role.
- The referee should be selected based on their ability to speak to the candidate's responsibilities, strengths, and areas for development.
- Include behavioural questions that specifically ask about the candidate's engagement with children and young people. This is particularly important for roles that involve direct engagement with children. Some examples include:
 - In what ways did the candidate demonstrate a commitment to child rights, safety, and wellbeing when working with your organisation?
 - Please describe a situation in which the candidate had to respond to concerns from family members about the service being provided to their child or young person? How did they approach this?
 - Provide an example that demonstrates the candidate's ability to relate to children and young people?

Further background checks should also include verifying the candidate's identity via certified copies of identification documents and qualifications.

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