



Secure Recruitment:

Guidance and Advice

Empowering Clubs, Elevating Coaches, Inspiring Gymnasts.

Contents:

Introduction

Non-recurring Volunteers

Parents

Secure Recruitment Processes

Candidate Information

Application

Attracting Candidates

Scrutinising Applications

References

Interview Process

Verification

Identity Checks

Confirming the Appointment

Criminal Record Checks

Overseas Candidates

Induction

Observing and Appraisal

1.Introduction



Safe recruitment practices must address safeguarding concerns throughout every stage of the hiring process for positions involving children. While the majority of coaches and officials or unqualified assistants are committed and dedicated individuals motivated by commendable reasons, it is crucial to take all necessary measures to prevent unsuitable individuals or those who might harm children from working in these roles.

The following procedures should be consistently adopted to ensure that gymnastics organisations recruit individuals who align with the organisations values and approach to safeguarding. These measures also serve as an effective deterrent to those who might seek to abuse children within the sport. All IGA-affiliated organisations should review their current practices and implement any necessary changes.

Since individuals with harmful intentions may attempt to exploit various opportunities to access children, it is essential that robust recruitment procedures are enforced for both paid and voluntary positions. These practices must be adhered to consistently, even when there is only one applicant for a position.

2. Non-Recurring Volunteers



The only current exception to this rule is for one-time volunteers who will have supervised contact with children. This may include:

- Parents or other volunteers assisting at a club fundraiser or event.
- Young people participating in work experience at the club.

Clubs operating a dedicated facility should implement a sign-in and sign-out system for these volunteers and visitors.

If one-time volunteering becomes more frequent, such as more than once a month, then the full recruitment procedures must be followed.

3. Parents



It is important to note that it is both inappropriate and, in the case of criminal records checks, unlawful to apply recruitment procedures to parents whose sole role is to care for their own child, such as a parent of a child with a disability who attends a gymnastics session to provide one-on-one support. However, if the individual wishes to assume a role within the club that involves responsibility for other young people, then the full recruitment procedures must be followed.

The following recruitment and selection procedures must be applied without unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation, and must fully comply with data protection regulations.

4. Secure Recruitment Processes



A comprehensive safe recruitment process should include the following key elements:

Preparing Candidate Information

This should involve:

- A job description outlining responsibilities related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- A person specification with clear references to the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- An application form that includes relevant safeguarding sections.

Attracting Candidates

Candidates can be reached through various channels such as advertisements in the press and on websites. All promotional materials must emphasise the importance of safeguarding and the use of criminal records checks in the recruitment process.

Scrutinizing Applications

Application forms should be thoroughly reviewed to identify discrepancies or anomalies, which should be addressed with the candidate during the interview.

Obtaining References

References should specifically address the applicant's suitability to work with children. With the applicant's consent, references should ideally be obtained before the interview to address any concerns at this stage.

Interview

The interview process should assess not only the candidate's suitability for the role but also their ability to work effectively with children.

Verifying

- The applicant's identity.
- Their right to work in the UK.
- Their qualifications.
- A criminal record check.

An enhanced DBS or home country equivalent check, in line with IGA's Criminal Record Checks Policy and Guidelines, is required for anyone over the age of sixteen who has not completed a check within the last three years or is not registered with the DBS Update Service.

Induction

The successful candidate should undergo an induction period where they are introduced to the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures. This includes assessing learning needs and providing appropriate training, coaching, and mentoring to address those needs.

Monitoring and Appraisal

Regular performance reviews should be conducted, especially during the probation period, to ensure ongoing suitability and effectiveness in the role.

5.Candidate Information



Anyone interested in the job or role should receive a candidate information pack. This pack should include the terms and conditions for the position, the application form, a job description, a person specification, and information about the organisation's safeguarding and equality policies.

The job description outlines the key roles and responsibilities associated with the position. Given that safeguarding children is a collective responsibility, the job description should highlight the potholders duties related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

In addition to the job description, the person specification should provide a profile of the 'ideal' candidate for the job. This specification serves as a framework to assess multiple candidates,

indicating which factors are essential and which are desirable. It is common to specify how each aspect will be evaluated, such as through interview questions. An essential criterion for all person specifications for roles involving work with young people is the candidate's suitability to work with children.

6. Application Form



All applicants should be required to complete a standard application form, even if they have provided a curriculum vitae (CV). This ensures that all necessary details are provided and facilitates easier comparison between applicants. The application should indicate that a criminal record check will be requested as part of the pre-recruitment process if a risk assessment deems it both proportionate and relevant to the position. Such positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and require applicants to disclose all cautions, reprimands, final warnings, and convictions, including those considered 'spent.' However, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' under the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) and are not subject to disclosure to employers. Guidance on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at gov.uk.

Applicants should be asked to provide the following information:

- Current and any former names, address, and other contact details.
- National Insurance number to confirm the right to work.
- Relevant academic or vocational qualifications and details of the awarding body.
- A full history, in chronological order, of any paid or voluntary positions working with children, including start and end dates and reasons for leaving.
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that demonstrate the applicant's suitability for the position and how they meet the person specification.
- Contact details of at least two referees (not relatives), one of whom should be a previous employer or club who can comment on the individual's experience and suitability to work with children and young people. The application form should indicate that references will be sought

for shortlisted candidates prior to the interview, except in the case of current employers where the applicant has a justifiable objection.

- Confirmation of whether they have any 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).

It should be highlighted that the successful applicant will be required to complete a criminal record check through IGA or the relevant Home Country Gymnastics governing body.

7. Attracting Candidates



When recruiting for positions involving young people, safeguarding must be prominently featured in all advertising. The recruiting organisation should prepare a safeguarding statement to be included in any publicity about the role. Additionally, the organisation should state that a criminal record check will be required as part of the recruitment process.

A sample advertisement should include:

- Details of the recruiting organisation
- Position and main duties and responsibilities
- Salary (or indication of whether expenses can be claimed if the role is voluntary)
- Experience/qualifications required
- Safeguarding statement: "IGA is committed to safeguarding children and ensuring all young people have a positive experience in the sport. Anyone recruited to work or volunteer for the organisation must be fully committed to these values."
- The use of criminal records checks as part of the recruitment and selection process

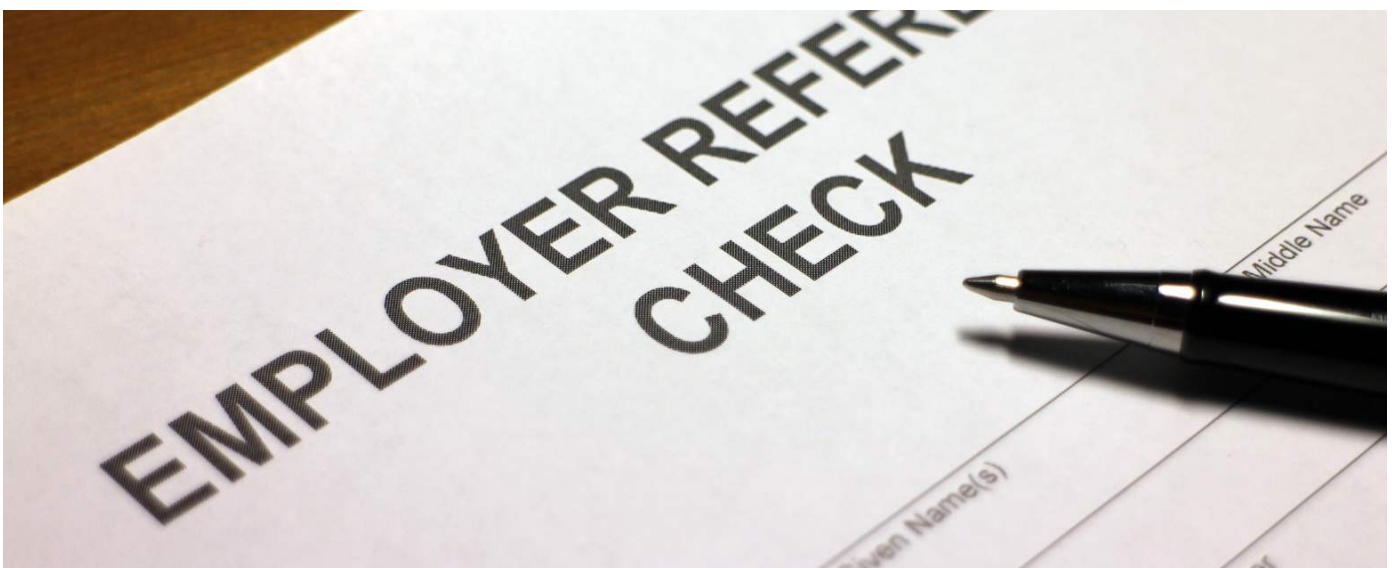
8. Scrutinising Applications



All applications should be carefully reviewed to ensure all required information is provided and to identify any areas of concern. This could include discrepancies in the information given or unexplained gaps in the applicant's involvement in the sport.

All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria outlined in the person specification without exception. A shortlist should be prepared, and any concerns identified from the application form should be addressed with the applicant during the interview.

9. References



Before the interview, and with the applicant's consent, references should be requested and relevant qualifications or previous experience should be confirmed where appropriate.

If an applicant indicates they have previous qualifications or experience in gymnastics, the recruiting organisation should request, in writing on formal headed paper, confirmation from IGA of:

- IGA membership status;
- Date of the last criminal record check;
- Any IGA qualifications or awards;
- Any known reasons for not employing or appointing the named person.

It is preferable to seek references before the interview to address any concerns with the applicant directly. If an applicant does not agree to their current employer being contacted, they should be informed that if they are the preferred candidate, they will need to address any issues raised by the current employer before their appointment can be confirmed.

References should also be sought from any previous organisations where the applicant worked in paid or voluntary positions with children. Using the IGA reference form for positions working with children can ensure all required information is covered by the referee.

10. Interviews



When a position involves significant contact with young people, a formal interview should be conducted according to proper procedures and protocols. The interview aims to assess candidates' qualities in relation to the job requirements and their suitability to work with children. A face-to-face interview is essential, even if there is only one candidate.

Additional information can be requested during the interview to support the details in the application form and address any disclosures made in the self-declaration of convictions. It is also important to explore any discrepancies between the information on the application form and the pre-interview checks.

For positions involving work with children, it is preferable to have at least two interviewers to ensure a thorough assessment of the candidate's responses. Interview panel members should have attended safeguarding awareness training at a minimum and have the authority to make recruitment decisions.

The interview process and questions should be agreed upon in advance. Questions should focus on the candidate's suitability to work with children and aim to identify underlying attitudes, which may require probing questioning techniques. This can include asking how the applicant handled a real situation involving young people or questioning why they believe specific aspects of the safeguarding policy are important.

The interview panel should address any concerns arising from the application form or references. They should also confirm the accuracy of the self-declaration details and the candidate's willingness to complete a DBS disclosure or equivalent, if required, in line with IGA's Criminal Record Checks Policy and Guidance.

11.Verification Processes



When recruiting individuals to work with children, it is essential to adopt a checklist to be completed after the selection process. A firm employment offer should not be made without satisfactory completion of this checklist, which should include:

- **Verification of identity**
- **Sponsorship and Endorsement of Migrant Workers**
 - If a non-EU national (migrant worker) wishes to live and work in the UK, they must apply to the UK Border Agency for a working visa under the new Points Based System. For further details, refer to [UKBA Home Office](#).

- **Verification of qualifications**

- To avoid any unnecessary delays, all candidates should be instructed to bring their identity documents to the interview. Candidates must also bring any qualification and award certificates.

12. Identity Checks



It is essential to confirm that the individual is who they claim to be. Since identity verification is required for the criminal record check application process, the Welfare Officer or another designated person should carry out the identity verification using the IGA Identity Verification Form (IVF). Original identity documents must be presented, and verification must be done in person to ensure the individual matches the photographic evidence provided.

13. Confirming the Appointment



Once the decision has been made to hire someone or invite them to take a voluntary role within a club or organisation, an offer letter should be issued. This letter should outline the full details and requirements of the position, including any applicable probation period. The applicant should be informed that the appointment is contingent upon satisfactory criminal record checks and reference verifications (if any references have not yet been reviewed).

14. Criminal Records Checks



The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, enacted in May 2012, established the following legal obligations for organisations:

- Not to knowingly allow a barred individual to engage in 'Regulated Activity'.

- To inform the DBS if an individual is removed from 'Regulated Activity' due to harm or the risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children.

A criminal records check will verify whether an individual is on a barred list. Members involved in regulated activities are required to complete an enhanced DBS check, including a barred list check, through IGA every three years. It is the responsibility of the affiliated organisation to assess the role and determine if a criminal record check is necessary and at what level, following IGA's Criminal Records Checks Policy & Guidance.

When recruiting a new employee or volunteer who is already a member of IGA and has completed an IGA disclosure within the past three years or is registered with the DBS Update Service, a new IGA disclosure is not mandatory. The recruiting organisation can decide whether to request a new check. If a new check is not requested, the organisation must confirm that IGA has approved the individual before finalising the appointment.

Before receiving an IGA approval of the criminal record check, the individual may be permitted to undertake a role that is supervised at all times by someone in regulated activity within the affiliated organisation, for a maximum period of six weeks.

The IGA Case Management Team is responsible for the initial assessment of any content on a disclosure and will make suitability decisions for low-risk content. For medium to high-risk content, the IGA Case Referral Management Group (CRMG) will handle the suitability decision. Affiliated organisations must adhere to IGA's decisions. IGA will promptly notify the recruiting organisation if a criminal record check reveals significant concerns.

15. Overseas Candidates



A DBS/Access NI/Disclosure Scotland Criminal Record Check does not offer a complete view of a criminal record for candidates who have resided in foreign countries. Different countries have varying

systems for conducting background checks, and not all are capable of providing this service. . Additionally, non-UK vetting is required for British passport holders who have lived abroad in the past five years.

16. Induction



While pre-recruitment processes are crucial, particularly as a deterrent for those who may be unsuitable, the initial induction period of a successful candidate is perhaps the most critical phase.

A well-structured induction program should address the specific needs of each new recruit and include various elements, such as:

- An overview of the IGA's safeguarding and child protection policies, along with other relevant policies.
- Formal signing of club policies, codes of ethics, and conduct.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities, including expectations.
- Assessment of learning needs, such as safeguarding, coaching, first aid, equality and diversity, and language proficiency if applicable.
- Provision of coaching and mentoring.

Mentorship is particularly valuable during the induction period, offering guidance and support on role adaptation, cultural differences, and overcoming language barriers.

Effective induction programs support the integration of new employees or volunteers into the club, identify potential issues, and enable timely corrective actions.

17.Observing and Appraisal



All staff and volunteers should have the opportunity to receive feedback, whether through formal appraisals or informal mentoring. While this is beneficial for any role, appraisals are particularly important for positions involving significant interaction with young people. Appraisals should be conducted regularly, starting with an evaluation at the end of the probation period and continuing on an annual basis. This process helps to identify learning needs, review goals, and address any concerns.

Each IGA-affiliated club must establish a procedure for handling complaints about staff and volunteers. It is important that parents and members are informed about how to raise a complaint or concern. The club's rules or constitution should include provisions for addressing complaints and implementing disciplinary actions.