

Interview questions

 Right people, right role, right knowledge

STANDARD 5

Robust human resource management

5.1

A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity's recruitment.

Indicator

5.1.3 Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and/or adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.

Pre-employment screening helps prevent people with a known history of violent and abusive behaviour gaining access to children through an organisation.

Screening (such as a working with children check or criminal records check) itself is not sufficient (it is limited to identifying known predators) and needs to be coupled with robust and focused interviews and referee checks.

Once appointed, ongoing supervision and monitoring is vital!

Sample interview questions and wording for use in interviews for work with children.

What has motivated you to apply for this role/ministry at this time?

What is your previous experience working with children? What was most challenging about that work?

What was most rewarding?

What particular skills, experience or qualifications do you have that are relevant for this role?

What training have you had previously that has prepared you for working with children? What was the most valuable learning that informed or changed your approach?

What strategies do you use when engaging with children? Give a practical example of how this has worked in the past.

What elements contribute to a safe and caring environment for children?

How would you describe appropriate professional boundaries in the context of this role? How do you ensure you maintain those boundaries?

Tell us about your experience working with children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. How have you been able to build trust and cultural understanding?

This ministry has a clear and unwavering commitment to upholding the dignity of every child we come into contact with. How do you see yourself demonstrating this commitment through your actions and interactions with children, parents and colleagues?

This position involves working with children from 10 to 18 years of age – tell us a little of your experience working with children of different ages – what strategies do you use, how do you actively listen and seek their input into your planning, how do you know you have met their needs?

Tell us about a time when you were under extreme pressure and remained calm, compassionate and focused at work.

Have you ever faced an ethical dilemma in the workplace? If so, what was the issue and what did you do?

What action would you take if a child disclosed to you that they were feeling unsafe?

Have you had experience of needing to mediate child-to-child bullying? What did you do?

This role is focused on working with children – how do you go about keeping parents and carers informed and involved appropriately?

What would children you have worked with in the past say about you?

Have you ever been investigated for a workplace misconduct incident related to work with children?

Have you ever been charged or convicted of a child-related offence?

Are there any aspects of this role or the broader team/ministry/organisation that you don't understand or would like clarification about?

Values-based interviewing

Values-based interviewing should be used to carefully assess the suitability of applicants when new staff or volunteers are being recruited.

Important areas to assess include:

- motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional);
- understanding of professional boundaries;
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs;
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld;
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness and non-discrimination); and
- attitudes towards working with children.

Red flags in applications which should be clarified or further explored at interview

- Gaps in dates (employment, residence)
- Incorrect, conflicting, omitted or incomplete information
- Unstable work history
- Frequent changes of employment
- Vague reasons for leaving roles/employment
- Over-educated or moving to a lesser paying job
- Defensive/angry responses
- Evasive responses
- Patterns of gaining access to particular children
- Patterns or themes of problems with authority