

Referee checks

 **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 questions for referee checking for work with children.

How long have you known [insert applicant name] and in what capacity? (e.g. manager/supervisor/colleague/parish priest, etc)

Check if the referee knows the applicant has applied for the role.

Check if the referee understands the nature of the role, and if not, provide information regarding the role and the ministry/organisation, especially in relation to work with children.

Please comment on [insert applicant name]'s skills and qualities you believe would make him/her suitable to care for or take responsibility for children?

What makes [insert applicant name] a good fit for this role/ministry/organisation?

In your view and in relation to this role, what do you see as [insert applicant name]'s - strengths? - weaknesses?

Can you comment on [insert applicant name]'s:

- reliability
- boundary setting and maintenance with children
- accountability
- attitude towards children
- relationships with colleagues
- trustworthiness

Have you had any concerns with [insert applicant name]'s performance, especially in relation to work with children?

If yes, please explain when these issues were identified? When were they discussed with the individual? What work are they doing to improve and what progress has been made?

As far as you are aware, has [insert applicant name] ever experienced any issues (including health related) which may affect his/her work in this role, especially in relation to his/her interaction with children? If yes, please describe the issues and/or circumstances.

As far as you are aware, has [insert applicant name] ever been charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence?

How strongly would you recommend [insert applicant name] for working with children?

- Highly recommend
- Recommend
- Don't know or can't say
- With reservations (seek clarification on the reservations)
- Not at all (seek more information as to why not at all)

To the best of your knowledge, is there any reason [insert applicant name] would be considered unsuitable to work with children?

If you had the opportunity, would you re-hire [insert applicant name]? Why?

Tell me what it is like to work with [insert applicant name].

What else do I need to know about [insert applicant name] that I haven't already asked?

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

- Reluctant referee
- Referees who do not know the applicant well
- Information the referee will not provide
- Information that differs from the applicant's account
- Evasive responses
- Referees that would not re-hire the applicant
- Referees that cannot be contacted
- Referees that were not informed they would be used
- Inability of applicant to provide referees of both genders

*Adapted from material sourced from National Committee for Professional Standards
Adapted from Reference checking template for hiring new employees, Fair Work Ombudsman,
www.fairwork.gov.au*