

TOOL 3.3.5 GUIDANCE ON SCREENING OF DAPS CENTRE STAFF¹

If proper screening of staff and volunteers for the DAPS Centre is not conducted, the following risks could become a reality:

- Employing or engaging a person who exploits or abuses a child and/or adult
- Employing or engaging a person who is not safe or suitable to work with or be in contact with children, leading to harm to a child or an undesired outcome to program
- Having no mechanism to terminate the employment of a person who is found to pose a risk to children

To mitigate these risks, the following steps should be taken:

- Ask behavioural based questions during recruitment

- Perform background checks and ideally criminal record checks
- Ensure that the contract makes clear the commitments to the Code of Conduct and systems for ending employment if breached

1. Child safe behaviour-based interview questions

In order to mitigate such risks, you should ask questions while recruiting and while supervising volunteers, which will assist in detection of attitudes and behaviours that are protective or of risk.

This is a sample list and you should select a few relevant questions only. You need to listen for answers that demonstrate a commitment to adhere to policies and to safeguard children from harm.

- Have you worked/volunteered with children in a similar position before? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?
- What strengths in working with children do you bring from your community, family and/or cultural background?
- How have you handled children who did not want to participate in an activity?
- What qualities have you observed in others that you have admired, particularly in regard to their work with or care of children?
- How do you feel about being supervised?
- What motivates you to work with this organisation, in this particular program?
- Please provide me with three examples of how to work safely with children.
- What do you think makes a good community leader or role model for children and young people?
- How would you handle children who were not listening to your instructions?
- How would the children or young people you have worked with previously describe you?
- How would you create a child-safe and friendly space for an activity for young children/ older children/ children with a disability?
- What exists locally that you believe helps protect children from harm in this community?
- What is your understanding of child protection?

¹ Excerpt from Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade "Child Protection Guidance Note" Recruitment and Screening, August 2019. Some of the text has been adapted for the DAPS Centre context.

- Red Cross/Red Crescent is a child-safe organisation. What do you think that means?
- We sent you a copy of our code of conduct before this interview. What do you think of the code?
- What boundaries are important when working with children and young people?
- If you were concerned about the actions or behaviour of a co-worker towards children, how would you respond?
- How would you involve children in their own protection as part of our programs?
- How would you involve children's participation and voice in our programs?

2. Undertake background and ideally criminal record checks

- Complete a criminal record check before engagement for all candidates working with or in contact with children (including existing staff within the organisation who are applying internally).
- Ensure the criminal record checks cover all countries of citizenship and for each country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the past five years (or more).
- If a reliable criminal record check cannot be obtained from a particular country, obtain a statutory declaration or local legal equivalent that:
 - outlines efforts made to obtain a foreign police check
 - discloses any charges and spent convictions related to child abuse and exploitation.
- A candidate poses an unacceptable risk to children and should not be employed or engaged if their criminal record check includes convictions or sentences for:
 - sexual offences against a child or an adult
 - violent offences against a child or an adult
 - any child abuse offence
 - stalking of a child or an adult
 - serious drug offences (trafficking a drug or supply of a drug of dependence to a child)
 - family and domestic violence offences.
- If the candidate's criminal record check includes driving offences, review this against the job description to determine whether the candidate will be required to transport children and adults.
- If the candidate's criminal record check includes other offences or sentences, undertake a risk assessment to decide whether the candidate poses an unacceptable risk to children and adults.

3. Other checks

- Assess the role and undertake a qualification and identity check where the role requires specific skills, knowledge, qualifications or service eligibility requirements.
- Conduct and document at least two verbal referee checks for all candidates working with or in contact with vulnerable populations (adults and children who are likely to come to the DAPS Centre).
- Seek referrals from:
 - former or current employers
 - places where a person has volunteered
 - community and church leaders, chiefs, sports coaches
 - others who have knowledge of the candidate's suitability to work with or be in contact with children.
- Always verify the identity of referees and if possible call them at their workplace or organisation.
- If you are not satisfied with the responses provided by referees, ask the candidate to nominate additional referees.

Example referee questions:

- The role involves (type of work or contact with children). Can you tell me about the candidate's work with children? Have you directly observed this work?
- Do you have any concerns about the candidate's work with children or with vulnerable children? If so, please explain.
- The candidate will be working in a remote location with little supervision. Do you have any concerns in this regard?

4. Ensure that the contract makes clear the commitments to the Code of Conduct and systems for ending employment if breached

Employment contracts and human resources policies and procedures must contain provisions for disciplinary sanctions such as:

- dismissal
- suspension with or without pay pending outcomes of an investigation

- suspension or transfer to other duties for any employee who is under investigation for breaching the child protection policy and/or code of conduct.

Example wording in employment contracts:

- X has the right to dismiss you or transfer you if you breach our child protection policy and/or code of conduct.