

Guidance Notes for making an application

Please read these Guidance Notes carefully before completing the application form.

For the post you are applying for we can only accept Childhood First application forms. We will use your application as the first step in the selection process therefore you should make the effort to complete the form fully and clearly.

As the post involves working with children it is important you complete the form honestly and it is not misleading in any way. We use robust selection and vetting techniques and if your application form is not accurate there can be very serious consequences.

Section 1: General Information

1. You must complete the application form yourself. If you have any difficulty completing the form because of disablement (e.g. partial sightedness, dyslexia, or other impairment), it can be completed by another person with information provided by yourself but you must sign it. You can also request an application form or the recruitment documents in a different format.
2. Please use black ink or type your application form. This helps when the applications are photocopied.
3. Please read the job description, person specification and any other papers carefully, before filling in the form. You may also wish to refer to our website or do your own research to ensure you understand everything. When writing your application refer to this information to check you are providing relevant information.
4. The selection criteria used is in the person specification. Please ensure you refer to each of the points, as no assumptions will be made about how you may fit the criteria, you need to tell us and show us.
5. If you are including additional sheets please ensure they are fixed securely to the application form.
6. You must complete all the forms, however some of these are not referred to during shortlisting. Please do not attach the declaration form or equal opportunity forms to your application. If emailing your application form we would prefer you send the declaration and equal opportunity form as a separate attachment within the same email.
7. The forms require signatures. If applying by email you can type in your name and if you are invited for interview you will be asked to sign these in person on the day.

8. The information provided in your application form is strictly confidential and any sensitive information you give will not be given to others unless they are involved in recruitment, the vetting process or those who we are content are exercising a legal right to access such information. Those who have a legal right include; Ofsted inspectors, Safeguarding Boards and the police.
9. For applicants who are successful in gaining employment the information you provide regarding your qualifications and relevant experience will be used in the Statement of Purpose as we are required by regulations to provide this information and saves you having to provide this again. However, if you wish you can defer permission to use this information from your application form by marking it clearly at the top as to your wish.

Section 2: Completing the Application form

Personal details

The information requested is in line with safeguarding best practice so we can check who you are. This information is not used as part of the selection process.

Please provide contact details where you can be contacted. Do not provide work phone numbers if you don't want us to contact you at work, or an email address you rarely check. If there is a more convenient time for contacting you include this information.

You do not need to provide your date of birth unless you are under 18 or are not 4 years older than the oldest child. The age of the oldest child is in the job pack or if it is closed, you can ask HR. We ask this question as the National Minimum Care Standards for Children's Home state that staff must be at least 18 or 4 years older than the oldest child. If you are not, we may need to explore your suitability more with you at interview.

We do not ask if you have a Legal Right to Work in the UK on the application form, but we will check this at interview stage. If you are not legally entitled to work in the UK we will not be able to employ you so please do not apply until you are allowed to work in the UK.

Address history

Please include your full address history including any time spent at university or overseas. There should not be any gap in your five year address history.

Education

Please include all your education, qualifications & relevant training. You will be asked to produce certificates confirming qualifications at a later stage. During the recruitment process we may contact your education establishment or training provider to verify your qualifications.

In most cases we can accept 'equivalent' qualifications to those listed. Please provide as much information as possible so we can evaluate whether they meet the requirements, this is particularly important with overseas qualifications where we may not be familiar with education structures in that country.

If you do not have a stated qualification but wish to state your case as how you have the equivalent via experience, you can do so on an additional sheet.

Work History

Starting with your present employer complete this section in date order and listing all work undertaken, paid and voluntary, since leaving school. Please account for any breaks/gaps in employment history since leaving full time education. Continue this section on a separate sheet if necessary.

Leisure activities and Interests

Provide details of interests that may be of interest to the young people you are applying working with. Interests that can be shared can help with initial relationship building.

It is also useful to provide details of hobbies and interests that are important to you, we can then explore with you at interview whether your interests are compatible with working the shifts. It is important for you to consider the impact work will have on your personal life.

Why are you applying for this job?

Please give your motivation for applying for this post and what you hope to gain. This helps us understand the context of your application and whether what you hope for is realistic.

We ask for the stresses you anticipate to see whether you have understood what the work entails and have given this enough thought. The post you are applying for is very rewarding, but is also challenging.

Personal Statement: Something about your development and key influences

You can answer the questions as you would like. What we are looking for is the ability to be reflective and an openness to our therapeutic model that recognises that our early life experiences, as well as adult experiences, contribute to who you are.

Working in a therapeutic community means you have to be ready to be 'known'.

Personal Statement: Details of skills, experience and personal qualities

We advise referring to the personal specification and using examples of how you meet the requirements.

References

Please provide details of people who can comment on your suitability for the post you are applying for.

One reference should be your most recent employer. If you do not want us to contact your current employer yet, please note this on the form. We can respect your wishes until a provisional offer is made, but we will take up all references before a confirmed offer can be made.

For the others please give reference details that will be an unbiased account, avoiding friends and family. It is more useful for us to speak to your previous employers where you have gained relevant experience

We reserve the right to approach any of your previous employers or education establishments to obtain references.

Driving licence

The role you are applying for will involve driving vehicles and transporting children, therefore a driving licence is required. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for applicants who cannot drive due to a disability.

The communities are in rural settings and public transport can be very limited. Please think carefully about the practicalities of getting to and from work before applying.

If you have points on your licence you may not be insured to drive our vehicles. You may be asked to complete a drivers risk assessment before being allowed to drive on company business.

Application Declaration

Please read the statements carefully and only sign the application form if you are confident you agree with the statements. If unsure you can speak to HR.

We ask you to declare people you have close relationships with as part of safeguarding best practice. Having these relationships will not affect your opportunity to employment, but we do need to know about them.

Section 3: Declaration: Cautions, rehabilitation and criminal records

You are required to complete the Declaration and you should return this with your application form. This form will not be reviewed until shortlisting has taken place. If you are barred from working with children we will not pursue your application any further. If you have a criminal record we will discuss this with you either at interview or under a separate discussion. Having a criminal record does not automatically stop your employment; we discuss it with you to understand the context and complete a risk assessment with regards to suitability. The first question in the risk assessment is whether the offence is relevant, if it is not relevant no further work is required.

We do check the information you have declared against DBS services and overseas police checks.

If you are not sure whether something has to be declared or not, please use the website links to obtain further information or speak to the Citizens Advice Bureau or ACAS, telling them the type of employment you are applying for. You can also seek advice from HR.

Section 4: Equal Opportunities Form

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to everyone within our employment or care. Our policy is to select, develop and promote people on the basis of their skills and abilities.

Childhood First makes every effort to ensure that there is no discrimination, either direct or indirect, on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability in all aspects of its work. We expect our staff to be in full agreement with these aims.

Any offer of employment will be subject, dependent on the nature of the post, to receipt of either Enhanced or Standard Disclosure from the DBS. Our Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and information about the Disqualification for Caring for Children Regulations 1991 accompany this form.

We would be grateful if you could complete the form so we can monitor how successful we are in meeting our policy.

None of the information on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be used in the selection process. If you prefer to send your form directly to HR you can do so.

We ask for your name so we have a reference point to be able to track it through the recruitment process. For example, we monitor the ratios of applications from the subgroups and whether these ratios match those who are offered jobs.

Section 4: Submitting your application

Please return the application to the address given at the end of the application form.

If posting your application please ensure the correct postage is used. In most cases we do not accept post which has a postage charge to be paid before we can receive the mail.

The application forms can not be handed in person. Please respect that the communities are the children's home and unexpected visitors can be upsetting.

If you have missed an application deadline you are welcome to contact HR to see if your application form could still be accepted, or to register your interest should a similar vacancy come available in the near future.

We receive a large number of applications and we are unable to acknowledge receipt of them all. If you require notification please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your application form or send a read receipt on your email account.

Information regarding unsuccessful candidates will be held for no longer than 6 months.

If you have applied previously and were unsuccessful you may apply for other vacancies by completing a new application form, unless the advert clearly asks for previous applicants not to reapply.

Section 5: What happens next

Once the closing date has past we will shortlist the applicants. If there are a large number of applicants shortlisted you may be asked to attend a group selection process, normally this will be information and group discussion or a group interview.

If invited to a group selection event we will evaluate on the day how well you demonstrated the job requirements and interact with others. We understand it is natural to be nervous and it is important to be yourself.

Interviews take place at the community and will usually be performed by a small panel. The interview questions will be centred around the person specification and will also address your suitability to work with the client group. Due to the nature of the work you may be asked personal questions about your history.

Once the final interviews are completed we make provisional offers subject to vetting checks. At this stage we do not advise you resign from your current employment as there is no guarantee of employment or when the vetting checks may be complete by.

Once the vetting checks are complete and we have all the documentation required the employment offers are confirmed and contracts of employment provide.