

Guidance document: Sample reference check questions (and red flags) for child-related roles

Conducting reference checks is another important way to determine whether a person is suitable to work with children.

Two (2) to three (3) reference checks must be obtained for each prospective employee. For prospective volunteers, two (2) reference checks will suffice. Religious appointees must also provide three (3) referees.

It is recommended that:

- the referees should not be related to the applicant,
- for employees, at least two (2) referees should be from a previous employer (where possible),
- records relating to each reference are kept (e.g. the name and the position of the referee, how long they have known the applicant) by the person who conduct the reference checks, and,
- answers within the green category 'positive signs' below are preferred. You should seek advice from the Diocesan HR Manager before employing or engaging a person if any of their referees' answers fall into the red category 'red flags' below.

In addition to the standard questions asked of referees, the following questions should be asked where the applicant will be working in a child-related role.

Sample Questions	Positive signs	Negative signs	"Red Flags"
<p>Ask the referee:</p> <p><i>Would you re-employ the applicant, if not why?</i></p> <p><i>Whilst employed with you, was the applicant the subject of any disciplinary process?</i></p> <p>If the applicant's previous position required them to work with children, ask the referee:</p> <p><i>How would you describe the applicant's behaviour and interaction with children?</i></p> <p><i>Are you aware of any reason that the applicant should not be working with children?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer provided by the referee corresponds with the applicant's answer. • No indication of any inappropriate behaviour/s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer provided by the referee is partly inconsistent with the applicant's answer. • Disclosure of applicant's inappropriate behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer provided by the referee is completely inconsistent with the applicant's answer. • Disclosure of the applicant's inappropriate behaviour. • Hesitation in reply • Declining to answer