

Value based interviewing: keep children safer through recruitment

An NSPCC factsheet

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This factsheet introduces the concept of Value-based interviewing (VBI) and explains how it can help organisations to recruit the most suitable people to work with children.

What is VBI?

VBI is a way of helping organisations to recruit the most suitable people to work with children. It helps employers assess the values, motives and attitudes of those who are applying for jobs. It focuses on "how" and "why" an applicant makes choices in work and seeks to explore reasons for their behaviour.

The VBI method builds on good recruitment and safeguarding practice. It is not a substitute for good pre-employment checks or sound general recruitment. It relies on an organisational commitment to high standards of safer recruitment and staff training from the top and a culture where children's safety and wellbeing are paramount.

The need to improve training around the selection of candidates to work with children has been highlighted by a number of official reports including the Bichard Inquiry (following the murders by Ian Huntley of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman), Choosing with Care (Warner, 1992 - an inquiry into the abuse of children in residential homes), and the serious case review into abuse by nursery worker Vanessa George.

What are the benefits of VBI?

Managers who use VBI have more in-depth information on which to make decisions about candidates' suitability. It provides managers with a true understanding of, and insight into, candidates' values and behaviours and how they are aligned with those of the organisation.

By appointing people using VBI an organisation is demonstrating its ongoing commitment to the values and behaviours which help create a safer environment for children. VBI helps select candidates who have positive

safeguarding attitudes and values, and who are therefore likely to be more effective in identifying and addressing safeguarding issues at work.

How does a VBI work?

The value-based interview forms part of safe recruitment processes but should never be used as a substitute for other recruitment methods in making recruitment decisions. VBI interviews are held separately from standard panel interviews by two VBI trained interviewers.

The VBI interviewers will select four to five questions that allow them to use the organisation's values and behaviours to explore a candidate's suitability to work with children. They use active listening skills and a range of questioning and probing techniques to explore a candidate's answers in-depth during the interview, which normally should take 45 to 60 minutes. Interview rooms should be set up in a more relaxing, less formal style for conducting a VBI.

References

Bichard, M. (2005) [The Bichard Inquiry: Final Report. Report by Sir Michael Bichard's reconvened Inquiry to establish progress on delivering the recommendations made in his original report published on 22 June 2004 \(PDF\)](#). London: Central Office of Information.

See recommendation 16: head teachers and school governors to receive training on how to ensure that interviews to appoint staff reflect the importance of safeguarding children (pages 11-12).

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Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (2010) [Serious case review overview report executive summary in respect of Nursery Z \(PDF\)](#). Plymouth: Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board.

Warner, N. (1992) [Choosing with care: the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Selection, Development and Management of Staff in Children's Homes](#). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).



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