

Safer recruitment of coaches/staff from overseas

Many sports have well-established systems for appointing coaches and other staff from outside the UK in a range of roles in this country. These individuals often play a vital role in the development of their sport – often at an elite level.

However, enthusiasm to secure the services of top class sports technicians should not impact on the organisation's existing safer recruitment practice. It is important that recruiters address safeguarding elements, despite the challenges that may arise in these circumstances.

This guidance is for anyone involved in recruiting staff from overseas, and outlines their key safer recruitment responsibilities.

Safer Recruitment – the basics

A safer recruitment process includes:

- a clear job description (*what the post holder will do*)
- a person specification (*what skills and qualities are required for the role*)
- an application form to elicit key information (*including a full employment history and an explanation for any gaps*)
- identity verification
- an interview process
- references - both professional and personal
- criminal records checks (*where role/post is eligible*)
- sign up to the organisation's safeguarding policy and codes of conduct.

Overseas applicants – additional challenges

Most of this process can be undertaken regardless of where the applicant originates from. However, there are a number of differences and challenges when considering an applicant from outside the UK.

1. Technical qualifications

There may be issues about the equivalence of sports qualifications, and difficulties in communicating with both sports and statutory bodies abroad.

2. Right to work checks

Employers must prevent illegal working in the UK by carrying out document checks on people before employing them to make sure they are allowed to work. For more information about Right to Work checks, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

3. Criminal Records Checks

The most significant challenges often arise when considering overseas applicants for roles that are eligible for criminal records checks. These include:

- the absence of equivalent systems for holding and sharing criminal records information
- variations in the reliability of information, and in its availability to UK agencies
- differences in criminal legislation, definitions and thresholds
- variations in data protection and data sharing standards and arrangements.

There is no direct equivalent elsewhere to the UK's criminal records checking system. However, the UK government has established, or is working to establish, arrangements with a growing number of



countries to facilitate information exchange about individuals. What information is available, and how it may be obtained, is different for each country.

For information about how to apply for information about overseas applicants visit one of these websites:

- [Disclosure and Barring Scheme - DBS \(formally CRB\) \(England and Wales\)](#)
- [Disclosure Scotland \(Scotland\)](#)
- [AccessNI \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

Undertake a criminal records check (where the post or role entitles you to do so) as this will cover any period (or periods) an individual has been resident in the UK, and in a small number of cases will facilitate a check on criminal records information from overseas which is held by the DBS.

Top tips in recruiting from overseas

Criminal records checks represent just one element of a sound recruitment process, and sports organisations considering applicants from overseas are also recommended to:

1. take robust steps to **verify the applicant's identity** (guidance is available through the respective Home Country disclosure service websites) **and legal entitlement to work**
2. seek out and follow guidance about **accessing criminal records** or equivalent information and checks **from the relevant country** (where the role or post is eligible). See [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#) for more information.
3. **contact the applicant's home sports governing body or federation** to establish currency and validity of qualifications, and establish if any safeguarding concerns or complaints have arisen and if disciplinary action was taken
4. seek and **follow up written references** including those from the applicant's last employer and from someone able to comment on the applicant's experience in working with children or young people
5. ensure that the individual is provided with **a thorough induction process** that establishes their level of safeguarding awareness and experience, and includes familiarization with the organisation's safeguarding policies, procedures and practices
6. If it is not possible to check an individual to the level required for UK applicants, the organisation should **establish additional safeguards**. These may include:
 - additional supervision or monitoring by staff who have been appropriately vetted
 - updated safeguarding training
 - taking particular care to explain the required standards of behaviour (there may be significant differences from one country to another about what are considered acceptable ways to relate to and deal with children); and so on.

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