

How to Complete a Candidate Online Search

Supporting guidance to be read in conjunction with the "Record of Online Search" form.

Note: Online searches should only be completed once you have your shortlisted candidates for interview and assessment and should focus on gaining an insight into the applicant's suitability to work with children **only**.

We would encourage an organisation to ensure the person undertaking searches receives suitable training and guidance. As a minimum we would recommend they are Safer Recruitment trained.

The person carrying out the online searches should not be otherwise involved in the recruitment process.

Part One – The Search

- It is important to accurately record the date the search process was undertaken and attempt to complete the search process for a candidate on the same day. If information is captured, for example by screenshot, this should also be captured on the date the search was undertaken however, if not the date the screen-shot was taken must be recorded on the document.
- Similarly it is important to detail the full name of the candidate as per the application form.
- The same search engine should be used for all searches. List which you choose (for example www.google.com).
- The specific searches conducted on a candidate should be listed clearly.
- The specific search terms used may be expanded based on the information provided in the candidate's application form. For example, if the candidate makes reference to volunteering for an organisation (i.e. Scouts, Brownies etc) you may wish to conduct a search for the term "full candidate name + Scouts".
- We would recommend against searches of social media sites such as Facebook, however LinkedIn may be useful to compare against employment history declared in the candidate application form.
- If the searches return for example, an applicant's sexuality, ethnicity or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, this information should be dismissed and should never be a factor in deciding whether they are a suitable candidate. The "searcher" should make every attempt to remove information of this nature from any evidence captured.

Part One - The Search Results

- After completing the search process for a candidate the "searcher" should consider the information obtained and its relevance to the candidates' suitability to work with children **only**.
- The "searcher" should select whether they feel the results find:
 - **No concerns** - If no concerns were identified the form should be passed to the interview panel and the date recorded.
 - **Concerns Identified** - If concerns have been identified, the remainder of part one of the form must be completed before passing the form and findings to the interview panel. The "searcher" should:

- indicate the nature of the concern identified
- pull together any supporting evidence/documentation that illustrates the concerns
- provide a brief rationale around the concerns identified

The form and any additional documentation should be passed to the interview panel and the date recorded.

Part Two – Interview Panel Enquiries with the Candidate

Part two of the form is designed to support the interview panel in capturing the process followed and enquiries made when concerns are identified during part one of the online search process.

- Prior to the interview and assessment stage, the panel should consider the findings of the searches and decide how they intend on making further enquiries with the candidate.
- It is common to ask candidate specific questions at interview after asking the structured questions put to each candidate. It is therefore a suitable opportunity to ask the candidate to provide their view on any information that the panel have concerns about, resulting from the online search process.
- The responses given by the candidate should be captured and the questions asked should be open and allow the candidate sufficient opportunity to share information with the panel.
- Following the interview process the panel should consider the candidates responses and reach a decision as to whether:
 - All concerns were addressed suitably – no further action required
 - Concerns remain
- In the case where no further action is needed, the panel decision should be recorded on the form and the form signed and dated by the panel chair.
- In the case that concerns still remain, the panel should consider if any further evidence can be obtained that will alleviate their concerns. For example, if approaching a third, previous employer for a reference would confirm information about the candidate then agreement should be sought from the candidate and the reference be obtained.
- The panel must reach a final decision on the candidates' suitability to work with children based on the evidence held and resulting from online searches and subsequent enquiries. Decisions should always be made using reasonable, unbiased and objective decision making.
- Clear evidence of any decision to withdraw the offer of an interview or to not make an offer of employment should be clearly documented and communicated with the candidate. We would encourage discussions with your HR Professional before making a final decision.