



## **Addendum to the LDBS booklet 'Appointment of Headteachers and Deputies' January 2007**

### **Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education**

The DfES guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' came into force on 1 January 2007. The guidance advises more stringent checks through the reference procedure which is now included in this section which should be added to the section in the LDBS publication 'Appointment of Headteachers and Deputies'. The advice here does not just mean that it should be used in these cases but in all appointments to your school. Also enclosed are revised letters on inviting to interview and seeking references.

### **References**

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should be sought and obtained directly from the referee. Do not rely on references provided by candidates or open references. Where possible references should be sought and obtained prior to interview so that any concerns can be explored further with the referee, or the candidate at interview. Where it has not been possible to obtain references prior to interview, you should ensure that it is received, scrutinised and any concerns resolved before an appointment is confirmed. The use of a reference proforma can help to achieve this (sample attached). A copy of the job description and person specification for the post should be included in reference requests which should also ask:

- what is the referee's relationship with the candidate:
  - do they have a working relationship –if so what?
  - how long have they known the candidate, and in what capacity?
  
- whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about how they have demonstrated that they have met the person specification.
  
- whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and if not, what the concerns are.

Referees should be reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and that the content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant. References should also seek:

- confirmation of details of current post including sickness record;
- specific verifiable comments about performance history and conduct;
- details of current disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to;

-details of disciplinary procedures, allegations or concerns that have been raised regarding the applicant involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired, and the outcome;

Information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered on an individual basis. Cases where an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or where allegations were unfounded and no further issues have been raised are less likely to cause concern than more serious, repeated or recent concerns. References should be checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily. Where answers are vague or questions have not been answered the referee should be telephoned and asked to provide written answers or amplification. References should be compared to the application form and discrepancies taken up with the applicant.