

**Verification of Employment history and reference checks**

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### **Verification of work history and references**

An employment history and reference check is the process to verify information provided by an individual as part of their application. It provides One Call 24 Limited (OneCall24) with a better picture of the individual's previous employment, training and/or other activities undertaken out in the community, such as volunteer work, which can help confirm a recruitment decision.

As part of the recruitment process, OneCall24 requires all candidates to complete a fully detailed, clearly signed, and dated application form outlining their employment history. In addition, a comprehensive CV must be provided, detailing the candidate's complete employment and training history with no unexplained gaps. Employment history must be reviewed and updated at least annually and also where required as part of any new role, placement or re-engagement decision. All documentation will be securely stored in the candidate's personnel file.

As a standard practice, OneCall24 will obtain a minimum of one reference from the candidate's current or most recent employer, typically via email. Prior consent must always be obtained from the candidate before contacting their current employer.

References are not to be used as the sole basis for shortlisting or determining a candidate's suitability for a role. Final appointment decisions will be made based on a holistic assessment, including but not limited to interviews, psychometric testing, and other relevant and proportionate selection methods appropriate to the position.

Information supplied on references will be cross referenced against the worker's CV/Employment History. Where any discrepancies are highlighted, these are raised with both the worker and the referee to establish what information supplied is indeed correct. The necessary amendments will be made, with a fully auditable trail available.

OneCall24 will always ensure that references obtained are done so in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and will not request health, sickness absence or disability-related information outside the permitted scope of pre-employment checks.

### **Employer's references**

While there is no legal requirement for employing organisations to provide references about people who are or were in their employment, employers have a duty of care to both patients and staff to ensure that all reasonable checks are undertaken to ascertain a person's suitability for any given role.

OneCall24 will ensure that all workers offered to and placed within the authority are stringently vetted. This will include receipt of confirmation of the worker's previous employment history. At all times, OneCall24 will comply with latest NHS Employers Check Standards.

Reference requests are made after the interview process has taken place and once a provisional offer of recruitment has been made. In certain circumstances it may be deemed reasonable and proportionate to seek references prior to interview, for example, when making senior appointments, such as medical consultants or board members. All of candidates are advised when obtaining references at an earlier stage in the recruitment process.

As part of the registration process, OneCall24 requires all workers to provide referee details in line with NHS standards. During recruitment, references must be obtained covering a minimum of three

years of the candidate's employment history. The number and type of references obtained will be proportionate to the individual's employment pattern and role being applied for. Wherever possible, one of these references should be from the candidate's current or most recent employment, assignment (lasting two weeks or more), or engagement, as appropriate. Each worker is required to supply complete referee information, including:

- the referee's full name,
- job title, band
- full address
- contact number
- a valid email address
- the dates of employment in MM/YYYY format

OneCall24 also ensures that candidates provide explicit consent for their referees to be contacted; without this consent, references cannot be obtained, and the worker will not be able to progress further in the registration process.

References will be requested using the standard reference template at point of registration. Only written references will be accepted, which must be fully complete and be received with acceptable verification.

Acceptable verification will be sought in the following forms:

- Business/company email address
- Company Stamp and signed by the referee
- Compliment slip, signed and dated by the referee
- Business Card
- Fax Header

To speed up the process, OneCall24 may contact the referee via telephone, and go through the reference form with them, completing all fields as discussed with the referee. OneCall24 will then forward the completed reference form to the referee for them to respond with acceptable verification, confirming that the information presented is true/correct.

References must contain the following criteria:

- Contain details of the work undertaken during those engagements
- Be obtained from the Supervising Consultant (ideally a permanent staff member) In the case of either Consultants or Associate Specialists; references must be obtained from the Clinical Director or Head of Department at the most recent substantive or long-term placement of four weeks or more in duration. In the case of recently graduated Drs, the Clinical Dean is the most suitable person to be contacted for a reference.
- Be relevant to the type of work either previously carried out or to be carried out by the potential Agency worker.
- Comment on the work undertaken by the potential Agency worker and experience, integrity, professional competence, personal qualities and track record during the period of employment.

If a reference is returned without sufficient verification, the referee will be chased to provide the required information as detailed above. If a reference is returned incomplete, the referee will once

again be contacted for the reference to be completed in full.

### **Unsatisfactory references**

If an unsatisfactory reference is provided, or inconsistencies are identified (i.e., dates of employment), OneCall24 will contact the referee via telephone to discuss the concerns highlighted. Once discussed, further clarification will be sought. Alternatively, OneCall24 will look to obtain further employment references from the workers previous work history. OneCall24 aim to investigate negative information by sensitively raising it with the candidate concerned, giving them opportunity to explain the situation in more detail and/or, where appropriate, give them chance to outline any learning from past mistakes or experiences to obtain the necessary assurances about their suitability for a role. Should it be determined that the worker is unsuitable to be placed by OneCall24 due to unsatisfactory references, the worker will be notified that they have failed the registration process.

References that are addressed 'To Whom it May Concern' are not automatically accepted. If the reference has been received as a response to a reference request made directly by One Call 24 (and evidence of this held on file), then the reference can be used as part of the workers registration with OneCall24. However, if the reference has not been supplied to OneCall24 based on a reference request or is not addressed to further clarification will be sought from the referee that the information provided is true and correct. Evidence of this verification will be obtained in written format, meeting the verification standards as detailed above.

Sometimes, information received in references contradicts that information provided by the candidate in their application. There may be a reasonable explanation for apparent discrepancies and OneCall24 will proceed sensitively to seek the necessary assurances directly with the candidate. In exceptional circumstances where there is serious misdirection, we may feel it appropriate to report their concerns to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority.

### **Other types of reference**

There may be several perfectly genuine reasons as to why a candidate cannot provide us with a referee from a previous employer. For example, this may be because the candidate has never worked before, or they have not worked for some considerable time, or their previous employer has ceased trading. In such cases, we seek a reference from their last known employer and source additional character or personal references to validate the required three-year period. If the candidate's previous employer refuses to provide a reference, we may seek the necessary assurances by obtaining a character or personal reference. Where limited references are available, the decision to appoint is made by the Head of Audits - with a full audit trail retained on file to support the decision and their application.

### **Character References**

Character and personal references can provide invaluable information to help build up a picture of the candidate's reliability, social skills, and experiences. They may also be useful to further support an application if the candidate has a previous criminal record history or where they genuinely cannot provide a previous employer reference, for example, because their previous employer has ceased trading. They can also provide additional information to support a person's application where the employer reference outlines that the individual has left because of an irretrievable breakdown in relationships.

The distinction between employer and character/personal references is made clear to our customers upon recruitment.

Asking specific questions is helpful in ensuring the referee provides us with accurate and factual information. These questions include how long they have known the candidate, in what capacity they have known them, and what skills/experience the candidate has demonstrated that might be regarded as valuable attributes for the position they are being recruited for.

### **Volunteer Activity References**

Where the applicant has indicated that they have undertaken volunteer work, references may be sought through the relevant charity body or organisation hosting that activity.

### **Training History Reference**

If the applicant has indicated that they have left or are leaving full-time education, references to validate their training history should be sought from the individual's professor, academic tutor or head teacher.

### **Self-Employment Reference**

For periods of self-employment, references should be sought to confirm that the individual's business was properly conducted. This may include seeking information from customers or clients, bankers, accountants, HM Revenue and Customs, or Companies House.

### **Armed Forces Reference**

Applicants from the armed forces should possess a Certificate of Service under cover of an official letter. Where the individual can present this, employers may accept this instead of needing to request a separate factual reference.

Certificates of service contain security marks such as holograms and therefore employers should verify these in the same way as any other official documentation.

### **Overseas references**

As part of our application process, individuals are required to give a reasonable account of any periods of over six months spent overseas. If a candidate says they were working or in training abroad One Call 24 will seek adequate references from the relevant body as early in the recruitment process as possible to prevent any unnecessary delays in making the appointment.

Some European countries issue employees with a government-issued labour book which contains information about their employment history. If such a labour book is presented, One Call 24 will accept this information in lieu of separate references from individual employers. Dates should be cross referenced with other documentary evidence including a passport, work permit or other travel or immigration status documents. All documents should be verified as bona fide through the relevant issuing body.

If an applicant is unable to provide sufficient documentary evidence of time spent abroad, One Call 24 needs to consider what additional assurances may be gained at interview, or through evidence of

other relevant training and experience in the UK. Where the necessary checks cannot be undertaken, or sufficient assurances are not available, it may not be possible to employ the individual.

### **Retaining and recording information**

Information relating to an employee's appointment must be recorded on Salesforce in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Any information gathered is retained for the minimum periods outlined within the codes of practice for handling information in health and social care.

Seeking a reference continues to play an important part in an employer's overall assessment of an individual's suitability when recruiting to NHS positions.

As a minimum, employers should seek at least one reference from the individual's current or previous employer via email. Permission should always be sought from the candidate before approaching their current employer. References should never be used as the sole grounds for shortlisting or assessing an applicant's suitability for a post. Any decision to appoint should be made based on the wider range of information gathered as part of the recruitment process. This may include interviews, psychometric tests or other forms of selection assessments that may be regarded as relevant and proportionate to the role being appointed to.

Where more than one reference can be practically obtained, these should be obtained as outlined in the pre-existing [NHS Employers pre-employment check standard](#).

Where NHS staff are being redeployed to a different NHS organisation, employers should aim to seek verification from HR on what information may be readily available about the individual on personnel systems, such as ESR.

In all cases, information should be sufficient to enable the employer to check any gaps or inconsistencies between information provided and in the candidate's application and self-declaration forms obtained as part of the wider check process.

Where it is genuinely impossible for a reference to be obtained, for example, if the individual's current or last employer has been forced to close, employers should base their recruitment decision on what information they can reasonably obtain as part of the interview and checking stages. Reasons for the recruitment decision and details of all efforts to obtain a reference should be recorded on file, this should also include any reasons as to why information could not be obtained.

### **Reference Summary**

Satisfactory written references will be retained on file, with explicit evidence of the workers conduct on previous employment relevant with the provision of care.

Satisfactory verification of why he/she left their last period of employment in a care capacity including no disciplinary record, no capability issues, no code of conduct issues

Prior to any placement, we will satisfy ourselves that the conditions of 8.4 have been met and each agency worker has work references relevant to the division that the worker is being placed in with reasonable explanation for any gaps in employment as well as the right to work check has been conducted.

For the avoidance of doubt, two written references, one from the current or most recent employer must be collected and confirmed by us as a minimum. If the candidate has worked in the Health and Social Care Industry, prior to the current or most recent role, then this must also be referenced and take precedence over any other non-Health/Social Care.

Candidates will not be put forward if there are any “safeguarding or care” concerns present in the references.

**Review**

This policy statement will be reviewed annually as part of our commitment to upholding professional standards. It may be altered from time to time in the light of legislative changes, operational procedures or other prevailing circumstances.

Reference Template

one call 24+ EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE

CONFIRMATION OF EMPLOYMENT REQUEST					
<p>The applicant named below has applied to join OneCall24 Group as an agency worker and has put you down as a point of contact. The applicant will be required to work in a number of facilities such as hospitals. Please may we ask you to complete the form to the best of your ability, carefully answering all the questions which will relate to the performance of the applicant within the workplace. As a referee, you would have worked with the applicant at the time of their employment as their senior.</p>					
Name of the applicant					
Please confirm employment dates			From:		
			To:		
Please confirm the applicant's current/most recent job title and grade					
Please confirm applicant's reason for leaving (if known)					
1. Are there any warnings on the applicant's record that have not been disposed of?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please give details (this may include any warnings that could have been imposed had the individual not left before the investigation concluded).					
2. Is the applicant under investigation for any matter (incl. conduct, or performance) under any of your employment policies?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please give details (this may include any formal action that could have been taken had the individual not left before the investigation concluded).					
3. Do you feel the applicant has the skills set and experience to cope with the demands of this role?			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If no, please give details:					
4. General performance of the named applicant: Please tick as appropriate, providing additional comments in support of the statements made					
	Unable to comment	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Skills demonstrated in line with the requirements of the position, and works to the required standards					
Relationships with patients, other healthcare workers and the public					
Timekeeping and management of workload					
Patient records and other records management					
Reliability					
Communication skills					
Organisational ability					
Sickness/absence record					
Attendance and Punctuality					

OC24 Employment Reference Request – V2

<b>Additional Comments in support of the statements made</b>		
<b>5. Would you re-employ this Candidate?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If not please explain reasons:		
<p><b>6. The answers given above have been provided in good faith and are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.</b></p> <p>Referee name (please print): _____ Signature: _____</p> <p>Email address: _____ Referee position/Job Title: _____</p> <p>Landline telephone number (work): _____ Name of Organisation: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box to confirm that, by providing this reference, you certify that you have clinically supervised the applicant and/or hold a higher position than the applicant.		
<p><b>Data Protection</b></p> <p>This form contains personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 (underpinned by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018). This data has been requested by the Human Resources/Workforce Department exclusively for the purpose of recruitment. The Human Resources/Workforce Department must protect any information disclosed within this form and ensure that it is not passed to anyone who is not authorised to have this information.</p>		