

Staffordshire Early Years Recruitment and Retention Toolkit

This recruitment and retention toolkit has been coproduced with early years providers of Staffordshire settings. It is designed to encourage reflection on current recruitment and retention procedures and to ensure that your provision and practice are compliant with current legislation. The toolkit will help to promote and encourage the early years workforce and support leaders with recruitment and retention within the early years sector.

This document should be completed by the Manager, with input from the staff team. It should be retained by the setting, and it will help to identify what future actions need to be taken. The toolkit can provide support to develop a robust recruitment process, and a robust strategic overview for staff retention.

Name of setting:

Name of person completing the document:

Date evaluation started:

Date of review:

Completion date:

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
Recruitment					
• Do you understand and follow safer recruitment processes?					
• Consider your current team structure, what gaps have you got, are there any staff wanting to move rooms for professional development or change current working hours that you have identified from staff supervisions?					
• Is there a clear job description? – (clearly written, easy to understand, clear roles and responsibilities, clear expectations, what qualifications needed, location of post, hours, pay/salary, experience)					
• Do you advertise across multiple channels? – (Facebook, job websites, recruitment agencies, your own website)					
• How are you using social media to demonstrate what a great place this is to work, as well as what a great place it is for children?					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What perks and benefits do you offer? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your unique selling point? Why would staff want to work for you? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to offer flexible working arrangements? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you offer regular training, employee development, team days out, employee discount for example gym membership, discount for own children, duvet days, future retention scheme e.g. 1 additional day leave per year worked? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you developed relationships with local universities, colleges, recruitment agencies for apprentices and placements? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered alternative ways to recruit such as staff friends, friends and family referrals, or recruitment open days? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a budget for recruitment? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you offer opportunities for candidates to visit the setting prior to interview? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a planned recruitment process which includes where you plan to advertise, and for how long? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a planned interview process? This may involve questions, presentation, scoring of interviewees etc.) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure that references are taken and received, and contracts are signed by new employees? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a follow up process? For example, are unsuccessful candidates added to a waiting list for future jobs? How will candidates be notified? Do you give feedback to unsuccessful candidates? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you keep in touch with unsuccessful applicants that show potential, for future growth? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you considered recruiting students or apprentices? Consider how this can complement your staffing structure and the benefits of home-grown staff. However, it is important to ensure there is a robust mentoring process in place. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your provision attractive to practitioners? What is it like for staff to work here? (Environment/suitable shifts etc.) How do your staff feel on a Sunday night/Monday morning? 					
Safer Recruitment					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your recruitment advertisements highlight the importance of safeguarding and the requirement for references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all staff, students and volunteers interviewed to ensure their suitability to fulfil the requirements of their role? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are two written references obtained for ALL staff, including students and volunteers? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure that proof of identification, training and qualifications are seen and recorded? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are relevant checks undertaken for all those in contact with children including the management committee members? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure that EY2 forms are completed for all committee members and EY3 forms are completed for notification of changes where applicable, in particular the changes of manager? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are personnel files maintained to include recruitment, selection and induction? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are safeguarding policies and procedures included in the induction process for all staff and volunteers? Do all staff and volunteers sign and date to acknowledge that they have read and understood the policies and procedures? Does the method for sharing this information and ensuring understanding reflect each individual staff member's style of learning? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
Retention - Retention is the key to balancing the recruitment crisis we face in the early years. Supporting the wellbeing and progression of the team is the first step in working towards this.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a strategic overview of staff retention and attrition? For example, do you record the reasons why employees leave? Consider creating a long-term plan to give you a better overview of this. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you track attrition (loss of employees)? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have systems in place that give you information about whether your levels of staff turnover are good, average or poor? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you carry out exit interviews to understand why employees are leaving? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you record the length of service for employees who have left? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you track this data to give a picture of the types of employees that are leaving? For example, if the average length of leavers is three months, then 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
it is likely to be a recruitment, training, or induction issue. If it is two years plus, then it could be due to a lack of opportunity to progress within the company.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you provide a quiet/safe space for staff to unwind and relax when they might be stressed or feeling low? Do you have a staff room/designated room? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider the wellbeing of your staff members? If they're not feeling good mentally or physically, they cannot fulfil their duties. Understanding colleague's moods, and recognising our own, can help create solutions and provide insight into how best to support each other. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you considered a wellbeing questionnaire to staff and revisiting this eg every 6 months? This could be useful in devising an action plan to support wellbeing and enables staff to have an anonymous voice. There is no escaping honest feedback! 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you provide a quiet space for lunch, away from the children? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a setting, do you exhibit and promote emotional intelligence and empathy? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you have in place to ensure that staff feel valued and supported? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What opportunities do you offer to your team to ensure they're heard? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are achievements of staff being acknowledged? For example, you could offer vouchers, ½ day leave or spa day etc. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you give annual performance-based pay reviews coupled with appraisals? Giving members of staff targets and goals to work towards keeps them motivated and provides them with things to look forward to in their career. Seeing the potential of your staff members and unlocking that 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
potential will in-turn motivate your team and increase their self-esteem. A team that feels valued will share their energy and enthusiasm, not only with each other, but with new members of staff too.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider intrinsic and extrinsic motivators? According to research we need to look at intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, and in order to retain staff, there has to be an element of both. It is important to recognise and use them effectively, as they are very individual to the person. - Extrinsic – motivated to perform an activity to earn a reward or avoid punishment - Intrinsic – motivated to perform an activity for its own sake and personal rewards <p>Examples of motivators - wellbeing days, posters, a chocolate bar, praise and recognition, promotion, training, flexible working, time in lieu, childcare, training.</p>					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created an environment that embraces diversity and culture? Do you celebrate festivals and cultural events, while being mindful of tokenism? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you minimised paperwork and checklists? Are you able to provide members of staff with weekly time out of the rooms to complete observations and required paperwork, so they don't have to complete tasks in their own time or after work? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about the ways in which you provide members of staff with clear career pathways, for example, CPD and training timetables to support their development and progression. How can you encourage them to take on new responsibilities and step up within your setting or company? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you developed a clear vision and mission statement that staff are involved in? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
• Do you have an open-door policy for staff to talk at any time?					
• How well do you know your staff strengths and their professional development journey? Think about setting realistic expectations for staff.					
• Do you carry out market research to understand what employee benefits competitors offer for potential employees?					
• Does anyone in your setting have a qualification in mental health first aid to support staff?					
<p>Induction</p> <p><i>3.21. The daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>EYFS Statutory Framework 2021</i></p>					
To meet this requirement, you should consider:					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well you develop a clear and comprehensive induction policy. Remember that a good induction procedure will help with the retention of staff. You should include details that you think are obvious. This will enable new staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settle into their role quickly Integrate into the team as a valued member Understand the setting's values and ethos Feel supported in their day-to-day role Work to their full potential Have regular supervisions during the induction period to enable staff to ask questions or clarify things. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you thought about how you will decide on the timeframe for the induction period? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a buddy system for new employees whereby they can receive support if needed? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<p>Pre-induction process- information provided prior to the new employee starting work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information do employees need to know before they start? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uniform - Hours of employment - Shift pattern • What do they need to bring on the first day? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bank details - Emergency contact details 					
<p>Induction- The first day and subsequent transition into the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your induction a structured process? And is it a plan that can be tailored easily to the employee and their roles? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a designated person who completes the induction? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how long your induction process is in order for it to be effective. 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
• Do you combine a variety of learning methods?					
• Does it give an overview of the structure and values of the setting?					
• Does your induction include introduction to the business, colleagues and important stakeholders (e.g. Trustee, directors, VMC members and room leaders)?					
• Do you have a staff handbook which contains terms and conditions, contact details, job description roles and responsibilities?					
• Do you have a staff code of conduct?					
• Do you effectively share rotas and hours of work with new employees?					
• Does the induction cover layout of premises, fire exits, where the fire assembly points are?					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it include health and safety training, risk assessments including reporting processes and daily visual checklists? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the induction include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding policy and procedures including SSCB Safeguarding Whistleblowing Training Food hygiene PFA Health and safety including risk assessments 					
<p>Supervision and Appraisal</p> <p>Dame Tickell's Report 2011 '<i>The Early Years: Foundation for life, health and learning</i>', highlighted the role of supervision in improving and maintaining effective early years provision.</p> <p>Supervision is mentioned in the EYFS, so it is a requirement of registration: -</p> <p><i>3.22. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>EYFS Statutory Framework 2021</i></p>					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<p>3.23. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to: • discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns • identify solutions to address issues as they arise • receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>EYFS Statutory Framework 2021</i></p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet this requirement, you should consider not only your approaches to supervision but also the types of supervision you carry out, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1:1’s - Group supervisions - Reflective supervisions - Observance of practice - Informal discussions - Formal processes - Appraisals - Having a supervision policy so that staff are aware of the process. 					
<i>“Feedback is the breakfast of Champions” Ken Blanchard</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you develop effective, positive relationships with your staff? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you got a long-term plan for staff training? 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you created an open-door policy where staff can talk to your manager at any time? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do you consider your staff commitments outside of work and how is this reflected in the ways in which you plan for them and support them? For example, some employees may have young children or an elderly parent. Have you considered flexible working? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there arrangements in place for the regular supervision and support for staff, students and volunteers? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your supervisions provide opportunities for staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss any issues, particularly concerning children's development and well-being? - Identify solutions to address issues as they arise? - Receive coaching and mentoring to improve their personal effectiveness? - Become aware of local processes and local learning from the SSCB in relation to child safeguarding 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
practice reviews and the key messages?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for recorded supervisions of staff that have contact with children and families? 					
Performance Management					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know the correct processes to adhere to comply with employment law? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you employ any HR specialists to support you with this, or have any access to HR support? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you got an employee handbook which includes a code of conduct for employees which is shared at the start of their employment? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all HR processes and procedures in the employee handbook? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure new employees sign to say they have read and agree to 					

	IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE	Action required (What? When? How?)	Person responsible	Completed (date and signature)
processes and procedures in the employee handbook?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have the following processes in place and record – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaching and support (supervision)? - Training? - Absence and lateness? - Performance? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you offer roles on the basis that a satisfactory probation period is completed? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ensure new employees sign contracts? 					

Acknowledgments to the following for their input into this document –
 Sadie Jones, Dollymixtures
 Jayne Waterman, Little People Nursery
 Kelly Hill, Codsall Community Nursery

Impact statement from Nichola Wigley, manager of Footsteps Nursery, Fradley –
“The staff retention toolkit was extremely useful in highlighting not only areas of improvement, but also things that we already offer and do well at as employers. I used the toolkit to highlight and re-enforce to new and existing candidates what we offer in terms of incentives and benefits.”