

Chaperone vetting and approval procedure

The Regulations The approval of Chaperones for child performances is regulated by The Children (Performance and Activities) Regulations 2014. The relevant extract is below:

Chaperones (15)

(1) A licensing authority must approve a person to be a chaperone to: (a) have care and control of the child; and (b) safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of the child, whilst the child is taking part in an activity, performance, or rehearsal or whilst the child is living elsewhere than the place the child would otherwise live during the period to which the licence applies.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply if a child is being cared for by a parent or teacher who would ordinarily provide the child's education.

(3) The maximum number of children a chaperone may take care of at any one time is: (a) twelve; or (b) where the person approved to act as a chaperone is the private teacher of the child in question, three.

(4) The licensing authority must not approve a person as a chaperone unless it is satisfied that the person: (a) is suitable and competent to exercise proper care and control of a child of the age and sex of the child in question; and (b) will not be prevented from carrying out duties towards the child by duties towards other children.

(5) Where a child suffers any injury or illness while under the care of the chaperone, the licence holder must ensure that the parent of the child named in the application form and the licensing and host authorities are notified immediately of such injury or illness.

In most cases, children from North Somerset are chaperoned by chaperones from North Somerset; however, there are also many cases where either:

- a) children from North Somerset are chaperoned by chaperones from other Local Authorities (LAs) or
- b) where chaperones from North Somerset chaperone children from other LAs.

The process of Local Authorities providing Chaperone approval for chaperones that live within their area is a pragmatic solution to the requirements of The Children (Performance and Activities) Regulations 2014.

Currently, the majority of LAs 'vet and approve' chaperones that live within their area; however, it is the LA where the child lives (the 'Licensing Authority') that will know the type of work that the child will be undertaking and has to 'approve' the chaperone to supervise the child/ren for the license.

LAs work together in this process and liaise with each other in order for the child's LA to establish whether they consider a chaperone to be competent as per the Regulations.

In cases where a North Somerset child is to be chaperoned by an 'out of county' chaperone, the Child Licensing Officer (CLO) must satisfy themselves that the out of county chaperone is suitable and competent to chaperone the North Somerset child. This involves contacting the LA where the chaperone is registered to check that the chaperone has been approved by them. In some cases we can ask what checks have been made on the chaperone in order for them to be approved. If in doubt the CLO should make any additional checks to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the chaperone, as stated in section 5 of the Regulations (below):

Power of licensing authorities to obtain additional information (5)

(1) The licensing authority may request such further information as it considers necessary to enable it to be satisfied that it should grant a licence as required by section 37(4) of the 1963 Act.

(2) In particular the licensing authority may: (a) request a report from the head teacher at the child's school; (b) request that the child be medically examined in order to ascertain whether the child is fit to take part in the performance or activity for which the licence is requested and that the child's health will not suffer as a result of taking part in that performance or activity; and (c) interview the applicant, the child, the child's parents, any proposed chaperone and any proposed private teacher.

(3) The licensing authority may make such inquiries as it considers necessary to enable it to consider whether a licence should be granted subject to a condition relating to the manner in which sums earned by the child in taking part in any performance or activity should be dealt with.

In the same way, other LAs will contact North Somerset Council to ask if a chaperone has been approved and can ask about the Council's chaperone vetting procedures. Information should be shared with the Licensing Authority as needed in order to assist them in deciding whether a chaperone is suitable and competent to look after the child/ren in question.

North Somerset Council vetting procedure:

1. Applicants can apply online via the North Somerset Council website, or applicants can submit a paper application which must be submitted to the following: CShub@n-somerset.gov.uk
2. Once a fully completed application form is received, we will acknowledge your application via letter. At this stage you **must** provide two referees, one must be a

personal referee that can vouch for your work with children and the other must be a current (or last) employer. Without two referees we cannot progress your application.

3. We will write to the two referees stated on your application form. Please note that if your referee does not respond within four weeks of us writing to them, we will close the application and inform you that we are not able to progress the application.

4. Once we have received both references, we will invite you to an interview. The interview will be with two members of North Somerset Council's licensing team. Interviewing will only be done by staff who have undergone the Safer Recruitment training.

5. At the interview stage we will also ask you to bring two passport sized photos, proof of identity, and also your right to work in the UK, therefore you will need to bring your current passport. We will also take payment for your DBS check. You will be sent the link for the DBS which you will need to complete online following the interview.

Or if you are on the DBS update service you will need to bring this information with you.

6. During the interview you will be asked if you have completed Safeguarding children training within the last two years; if you have not completed your training through North Somerset Council you will need to bring your certificate of completion. You will need to have at least completed the basic awareness course or equivalent through a recognised organisation such as the NSPCC.

7. If you have not had training within the last two years- we will provide you with details of how to book the training through North Somerset Council. Safeguarding children training is a mandatory requirement for Chaperones. You must complete the training within 12 weeks of issue of your license. If the training is not completed within 12 weeks, the council reserves the right to withdraw the license

8. Once we have received confirmation that the DBS check has been approved, we will issue your license to you by post. Please note that the license will initially be issued for 12 weeks pending the completion of the safeguarding training, once proof is provided of training, we will extend the license to three years.

The license will be valid for three years.

9. All Chaperones will be required to undertake NSC's Safeguarding Update Chaperone Training annually. You must book a safeguarding refresher each year.

10. Applicants must complete the Home office "Prevent" training via the following: <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

Applicants will need to provide a copy of the certificate as proof of attendance at the interview.

There are also optional courses that applicants may consider booking, such as:

- First Aid

- Criminal and sexual exploitation
- Peer on Peer abuse
- Mental health first aid
- Online safety
- Female genital Mutilation (FGM)

All courses are bookable through the council's CPD online service.

<https://www.n-somersetcpd.org.uk>

Please note that if your application is assessed as being "unsuitable" at any stage of the vetting procedure we will contact you to inform you why this is the case and also inform you about what you need to do to reapply if appropriate.

The Chaperone Person Specification is available on our website as well as useful information for Chaperones and links to codes of conduct for working safely with children. It is expected that for all new applications; applicants will have read this information prior to applying.

Chaperone Renewals

The same process as above will apply for renewals.

Queries

If the CLO has any concerns about a current or prospective chaperone, they should raise them immediately with their line manager.

Allegations

Concerns about a chaperone should be raised by the CLO with their line manager. The Line manager should liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) where appropriate.

For more information, please refer to the guidance for safer working practice, and your code of conduct.

Complaints

Any complaints about this procedure should be dealt with in accordance with North Somerset Council's Complaints Procedure.

Checklist for applicants

Actions to take Prior to the meeting:

1. Attend Safeguarding Children Training (If possible)
2. Complete the Home office "Prevent" training

Documents to take to the interview:

1. Two passport sized photos
2. Proof of identity and right to work in the UK
3. Payment for DBS check, or if you use the DBS update service this information
4. Evidence of Safeguarding Training
5. Evidence of Prevent training

Useful links

Code of conduct

<https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/13ecce28-e8f2-49e9-83c6-c29337cd8071~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

NSPCC training

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training>