

News Release

NHS Employers issues new guidance to protect NHS patients

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NHS Employers has today issued new updated guidance to make NHS services safer for patients.

Launched at the HR in the NHS Conference, *Safer Recruitment - a guidance for NHS employers* gives HR staff clear guidelines on how to carry out thorough pre-appointment checks on potential new employees. The guidance includes information on what checks need to be carried out, including checks on identify, qualifications, criminal records, registration and entitlement to work in the UK. There is also advice on what checks need to be carried out on existing staff.

"Running checks on new staff is vital. Failure to do this properly could lead to the appointment of an unsuitable person who may be a threat to patients or put them at risk," said NHS Employers senior business manager Gordon Fleck.

The new guidance replaces directions issued three years ago by the Department of Health. They apply to all NHS employers, including NHS foundation trusts, GPs and dentists, and to all appointments, including employees, volunteers, students and contractors.

"As with everything else in the NHS, things have moved on over the past three years and it was time for an update. We've also taken the opportunity to provide the information electronically, which is easier for people to use and has allowed us to go into a lot more detail than before. It also means we can update it whenever necessary," said Mr Fleck.

The new guidelines cover mandatory checks required by law and also checks that are considered appropriate under the Department of Health's Standards for Better Health. The Healthcare Commission will be responsible for monitoring trusts' compliance with carrying out the checks.