

## Identifying Name Changes in Hiring

The Better Hiring Institute (BHI) exists to transform the UK labour market with a mission to make hiring Faster, Fairer and Safer.

The BHI recognises that the UK must do all it can to close the gaps to prevent any real or perceived threat to the public, in particular children or vulnerable adults to stop someone from being employed who might have changed their name for nefarious reasons.

There have been concerns in the past, but not a lot of evidence, that applicants can hide criminality information by changing their name. Working with a range of employers from a variety of sectors, the Better Hiring Institute have developed guidance on how employers can identify when job applicants and current employees have changed their name in hiring and during employment, most of which occurs for legitimate reasons.

An occurrence of name changing is often evidenced by a marriage certificate, divorce certificate/record, or any additional identity document.

### Identifying Name Changes in Hiring and Employment

We have two checklists, one for hiring and one for staff in employment.

#### [Identifying Name Change in Hiring Checklist:](#)

##### Check Current Identity Documents

Verifying the identity of the individual being hired to an acceptable level of assurance is a fundamental element of the onboarding process. All checks conducted as part of the hiring process are predicated on the principle that the individual being checked is who they say they are.

If there is a difference of name in any document, this suggests the applicant may well have changed their name. Employers should check this has been declared and additional documentation has been provided to support this.

This proof of identity checklist provides examples of acceptable documentation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proof-of-identity-checklist/proof-of-identity-checklist>

##### Check Referencing History and Name Match

There are two core elements to what most organisations refer to as an employment reference check: employment verification (date and role confirmation from previous employer) and substantive referencing (meaningful commentary on conduct and competence of individual being referenced). Many organisations who are not required by statutory or regulatory obligation to provide a substantive reference, will opt to provide only an employment verification. However, they should be mindful of both.

All names on the references that organisations receive back should contain the same name without variations. Check all references returned from referees to confirm no additional name change.

### **Education Credentials Name Check**

Whether for a qualification that is specific and relevant to a role, or simply to establish that a benchmark of educational attainment has been met, education/qualification checks are an important part of establishing whether an individual is suitable for a role for which they have applied.

If an applicant has educational credentials that are in a different name, employers should check the alternative name has been declared.

### **Professional Registration/Regulation**

It is essential to not only verify that an individual is qualified to occupy a particular role but, in some sectors, also to conduct Professional Registration checks to ensure that they hold valid professional registration with their specific governing body or regulator.

All names should match what the applicant is presenting to you.

### **Cross Reference with the DBS Application and Declaration**

Employers can check the criminal record of someone applying for a role. In England and Wales this is done via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Guidance for employers about DBS checks, including how to apply, registering with the DBS and the code of practice can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>

Employers must cross reference the DBS application and name declaration, ensuring name history matches.

### **Identifying Name Change in Employment Checklist:**

#### **Check Identity Documents**

Re-verifying the identity of your individual in employment to ensure all names match across all documentation provided. Checks conducted as part of the hiring process should match any additional checks that have been completed since the employee started their employment - This includes marriage and divorce record check (where applicable).

If there is a difference of name in any document this suggests the individual may well have changed their name. Employers should check this has been declared and additional documentation has been provided to support this.

This proof of identity checklist provides examples of acceptable documentation- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proof-of-identity-checklist/proof-of-identity-checklist>

### **Renew a Criminal Record Check (where applicable)**

When renewing a DBS check, be sure there have been no changes to the candidate's name from the previous check. If there has been a change, employers should check this has been declared and additional documentation has been provided to support this.

### **Check Reference History and Name Match**

Employers who may not have historically checked references for a name variation should check all previous references to ensure that there were no alternatives of the individual's name. All names on the references received back have should be the same and without variations.

There are two core elements to what most organisations refer to as an employment reference check: employment verification (date and role confirmation from previous employer) and substantive referencing (meaningful commentary on conduct and competence of individual being referenced). Many organisations not required to by statutory or regulatory obligation will opt to satisfy just the former although, they should be mindful of both.

### **Education Credentials Name Check**

Employers who may not have historically checked education certificates and documents (including educational credentials obtained whilst employed) should do so to ensure that there were no alternatives or variations of the individual's name. If there has been a change, employers should check this has been declared and additional documentation has been provided to support this.

Whether for a qualification specific and relevant to a role, or simply to establish that a benchmark of educational attainment has been met, education/qualification checks are an important part of establishing whether an individual is suitable for a role for which they have applied.