

GUIDANCE FOR QUAKER AREA MEETINGS ON SEEKING REFERENCES

You should always seek references, both for paid and for voluntary posts. You should ideally seek two references and both of them should be from previous work (paid or voluntary). Where this is not possible, seek a reference from a school or college.

You should not contact a referee until you have offered the job or voluntary post and you have the individual's permission to approach referees.

It is best to seek references in writing. For data protection reasons, you are advised to ask the person to authorise your contacting their referee in writing; you can then send this authorisation to the referee.

Below is an example authorisation:

Reference authorisation

I authorise _____ [xx Area Meeting] to seek a reference about me from _____ [state name of previous or current employer] in respect of a provisional job offer with _____ [xx Area Meeting]. The reference should be sought from NAME at EMPLOYER, of ADDRESS and EMAIL.

I consent to the following data being sought from the referee:

- Dates of employment
- Job title
- Salary on leaving
- Reason for leaving
- Number of days absent over the past 12 months
- Responsibilities held when employed
- Overall comment on performance during employment.

I understand that this reference authorisation will be sent to my referee when a reference is sought.

Print name.....

Signed.....

Date.....

Your reference request should be along the lines of the example letter below.

Dear XXX,

XXXXXX has given your name to us as a referee. We have recently interviewed XXX for the post of XXXX.

I would be very grateful if you could confirm the following at your earliest convenience:

- Dates of employment with your organisation
- The capacity in which you worked with this individual (eg line manager, other relationship)

- Job title that the individual held
- Their salary on leaving
- Their reason for leaving
- The number of days' absence from work that the individual had over the past 12 months
- Their responsibilities when employed with you (a brief overview)
- Your overall comment on their performance during employment.

Please find attached a signed form from this individual, authorising your provision of this information.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Job Title

Note that previous employers are not *obliged* to provide a reference.

Use the reference to confirm a selection decision, not to make the selection decision for you. If you receive a bad reference, you may wish to obtain another reference, to provide further information. Sometimes employers are the unreasonable ones, not the employees!