



The AYP A - Due diligence

and spotting Red Flags

Following public concern surrounding recent rogue casting calls, we have put together the following guidance for agents and parents of child actors to assist in spotting potential red flags for casting calls.

In addition, we flagged this situation to Spotlight and Filmmakers so they can also be vigilant with the knowledge that individuals are using the guise of casting to have contact with children.

We have advised the CDG and CDA that agents will be asking CDs to verify email addresses that are unrecognised, for instance, Gmail addresses rather than @office.com emails and we have asked for their cooperation in this matter.

Verify the casting source

1. **Research the production company:** Look up the production contact, Casting Director or individual running the casting call. Legitimate companies will have a professional website, verifiable contact information, and often a proven track record in the industry. Checking websites, IMDb, and Companies House is the first stage.
 - Breakdowns sent unsolicited via email rather than via a casting platform should be subject to the highest level of scrutiny.
 - **ASK QUESTIONS!** Any legitimate company will understand and welcome questions being asked.
2. **Seek references:** Ask for references from other agents who have worked with the company before. Reach out to colleagues to ask other agents' advice.
 - Be aware of instances where they may use the name of a legitimate CD but from a Gmail address. Contact said CD on their office email or phone to verify.

Red flags:

- No links to the company in the signature bar
- No phone number in the signature bar

Analyse the casting call details

1. **Vague job descriptions:** Be cautious of casting calls with very little detail about the project, roles, or production company.
2. **Unprofessional communication:** Poor grammar, spelling errors, and unprofessional language in emails or advertisements can be a sign of a scam.

3. **Urgency and pressure:** Be wary of casting calls that create a sense of urgency or pressure to act quickly without proper consideration.

Red Flags:

- Language that does not make sense

Financial red flags

1. **Upfront fees:** Legitimate casting calls do not require payment to audition or secure a role. Be suspicious of requests for fees for registration, portfolio reviews, or guaranteed roles.
 - Unusual industry norms: A recent casting call claimed they would pay a £30 casting fee to all kids and yet invited everyone as an open call. This would not happen in a legitimate casting. Casting fees are now incredibly rare and the above figure would be outside of industry practice.

Meeting and audition venues

1. **Non-professional locations:** Legitimate auditions are typically held in professional studios, casting offices, or known industry locations. Be wary of auditions in private homes, hotel rooms, or remote locations without proper justification.
 - Will there be a chaperone at the casting? Ask for the chaperone licenses and/or DBS certificates for those who will be with the children in the room.
 - Ask for their privacy policy and what they will do with the footage taken in the room.
 - Parents should never be afraid to remove their child if they do not feel comfortable. Parents should always know who is going to be in the room with their child BEFORE they get to the casting.

Contracts and legal agreements

1. **Review contracts thoroughly:** Ensure all contracts and agreements are reviewed by a knowledgeable industry representative.
2. **Understand terms:** Be cautious of contracts with vague terms, unreasonable obligations, or clauses that seem exploitative.

Professionalism and conduct

1. **Professional interaction:** Legitimate casting professionals maintain a high standard of professionalism. Be wary of overly informal communication or inappropriate behaviour.

References and testimonials

1. **Check Testimonials:** Look for testimonials from previous actors and professionals who have worked with the agency or casting director.
2. **Industry Recognition:** Verify if the agency or casting director has any industry recognition or memberships in professional organisations.

Online presence

1. **Website and Social Media:** Check the company or Casting Director's website and social media presence.
2. Over inflated social media presence does not always suggest legitimacy.

Trust your instincts

1. **Gut feeling:** If something feels off or too good to be true, trust your instincts and proceed with caution.
2. **Seek advice:** Do not hesitate to seek advice from trusted industry professionals if you have any doubts.

By remaining vigilant and thoroughly vetting casting calls, parents and agents can help to protect young actors from falling prey to bogus castings. Always prioritise safety, and professionalism. Thorough verification will help to ensure legitimate and beneficial opportunities within the industry.

Further Advice from the CDA

More than anything this highlights the need for an Agent who is a member of a professional body such as the AYPAs or to check that the CD is either CDA or CDG.

If a parent is concerned about a casting and can not contact their Agent or a CDA member please ask them to email either

chair@thecastingdirectorsassociation.com

admin@thecastingdirectorsassociation.com

The CDA will implement the following:

Mandatory for all CDA members to have an Enhanced DBS

All CDA members assistants who run a children's session must have a DBS in place.

Chaperones in Castings - CDA members should recommend that Production have a licensed Chaperone present in Children's castings

Important Points from the CDG



1. Check the CDG and CDA website to make sure if they are a member of either organisation
2. If you have any doubts and need to check a Casting Director (that is a member of the CDG) then please do get in touch with the CDG – info@thecdg.co.uk
3. All CDG members are recommended to have an enhanced DBS if they or any of their teams are working with children