

By: Cabinet Member, Corporate Support Services &
Performance Management
Director of Personnel & Development

To: Governance and Audit Committee – 30 June 2010

Subject: Criminal Records Bureau checks

Classification: Unrestricted – for information

Summary: This report provides information on the current requirements for undertaking Criminal Records Bureau checks on employees and volunteers working for Kent County Council and its maintained schools.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following discussions on the 2010/11 Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan at the April meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that the Director of Personnel & Development be asked to submit a report on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) requirements and practices to the next meeting.
- 1.2 Work is continuing to ensure the Authority is ready to comply with the new vetting and barring system which comes into force in July this year.

2. Schools

2.1 CRB check requirements

- 2.1.1 In April 2006, it became a statutory requirement for all employees and regular volunteers, newly appointed to schools, to obtain an Enhanced CRB Disclosure. Following national concern from Ofsted further legislation was introduced, effective from 1 January 2007, requiring schools to ensure that a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure check had been carried out, as appropriate, on all staff appointed since March 2002 when CRB checking commenced. In addition, schools were required to compile and maintain a list of their entire workforce, showing that specific recruitment checks had been carried out. This list, known as the single central record, must be available for inspection by Ofsted at the commencement of a school's inspection.
- 2.1.2 There is still no statutory requirement to undertake re-checks on those continuously employed in the Education sector or to ask employees appointed prior to March 2002 to obtain a Disclosure as these staff will have had a police check. All employees and volunteers must have been checked against the list of those barred from working with children, prior to the commencement of their employment, and this is noted on the school's single central record.

2.2 Processes and practices

- 2.2.1 KCC's Schools' Personnel Service (SPS) is funded by the CFE Directorate, through non-delegated school funding, to manage a CRB service to all KCC's maintained schools. Each school has access to an electronic system where CRB disclosure applications are completed by new appointees and submitted via the internet. A school can view the records of all previous CRB Disclosures completed for their employees and volunteers and track the progress of new applications.
- 2.2.2 All Disclosure applications for schools are now submitted to the CRB electronically and results of 'clear' Disclosures are returned electronically via a system known as e-bulk. On average results are received within 9 days with some Disclosures being issued within 48 hours of the application being made.
- 2.2.3 The number of Disclosure applications submitted to the CRB for KCC schools in 2009 was 11,048. An additional 17,699 checks were made by SPS against the list of those barred from working with children, for those not eligible for CRB checks; this includes volunteers and Governors that do not have regular contact with children and contractors working on schools sites in the Building Schools for the Future and Private Finance Initiative programmes.
- 2.2.4 SPS has no involvement in the recruitment of volunteers in schools or in the appointment of staff to schools who choose to buy personnel services from an alternative provider. SPS still process the CRB checks for these schools but have no means of confirming whether schools are checking all relevant volunteers and staff in non-buying schools. However, the electronic system has made it far easier for Schools to ensure they meet their statutory requirements. The indication from CFE compliance visits completed in 2009/10 is that Schools are obtaining CRB checks on their employees. In addition, SPS checks that all new employees, in schools that utilise their services, have submitted an application for a Disclosure.
- 2.2.5 The table at appendix 2 shows the split of employee and volunteer Disclosure checks made for schools and demonstrates how the e-bulk system has considerably reduced the time for a Disclosure to be issued and has eliminated the need to chase for outstanding applications.

3. KCC staff and volunteers

- 3.1 CRB check requirements, processes and practices for KCC are described in the attached document.
- 3.2 A total of 7,448 checks and renewals were processed in 2009.
- 3.3 All new staff CRB checks and renewals are requested by a form from an authorised manager. Volunteers CRB checks are requested in the same

- way. An authorised manager is a manager who has received the CRB code of conduct and been registered as an authorised Identity verifier.
- 3.4 Employees are entered onto Oracle for tracking purposes and may start before the CRB disclosure certificate has been returned if a Supervision form has been signed. Volunteers are entered onto a database and are tracked separately. Volunteers do not start until the manager has received confirmation that the CRB disclosure certificate has been received. CRB disclosure applications are sent on line and there are automatic reminders sent if the application is not completed.
 - 3.5 A robust escalation process is in place to ensure applications are completed.
 - 3.6 The table at appendix 3 shows the split of employee and volunteer Disclosure checks made for non schools. The on line system is significantly faster than the previous paper based one.

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