

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013/14

COMMITTEE:

AUDIT COMMITTEE

31st March 2014

Item No. 3
DBS Checks

REPORT OF:-

GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

Author: Marc Crumbie (Operational Audit Manager)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides Members with the outcome of the work requested at the Audit Committee dated 6th January 2014.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

2.1 Note the contents of this Report.

2.2 Consider what comments and recommendations, if any, they wish to make.

3. BACKGROUND AND OUTCOME OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN

3.1 During the Audit Committee meeting on the 6th January 2014, under Agenda item 5 – Finalised Audit Assignments, an issue was noted in respect of a member of staff commencing in their post at Trallwng Infants prior to receipt of a cleared (Council) DBS check. Following discussion, Audit Committee resolved:

e) That the Operational Audit Manager undertake an audit review to provide assurance that no other members of staff have commenced duties within a school environment without the necessary processes having been followed.

3.2 While Estyn advise that the Council is permitted to place reliance on an existing DBS check from another organisation, the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate has opted to increase the control environment further by

requiring a cleared DBS check (processed by the Council’s Human Resources Service) be in place prior to a staff member commencing in post.

- 3.3 Both the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Director of Human Resources acknowledge that there will be circumstances under which a member of staff is required to commence their duties urgently. On such occasions, the Headteacher can seek written approval from the Directors to place reliance on an existing DBS check as an interim measure. A subsequent DBS check completed by Human Resources and in line with procedure will still be completed.
- 3.4 Internal Audit has undertaken a review of all 961 employees who commenced in their post in a school environment between the 19th April 2013 and the 6th February 2014. Analysis to ascertain the level of compliance in respect of Estyn and Council procedure was performed and is summarised in the table below:

Full compliance with Estyn requirements and Council procedure	924
Compliance with Estyn requirements demonstrated but full compliance with the Council procedure not evident (i.e. approval from the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and Director of Human Resources was not obtained).	32
Instances where DBS Checks were not in place prior to a staff member commencing in post.	5
Total	961

- 3.5 The analysis undertaken by Internal Audit shows 956 instances out of 961 where staff recruitment in schools met the requirements identified by Estyn.
- 3.6 Of the 5 instances where non-compliance has been identified, 2 were caused by a breakdown of communication between the school and the Council’s Human Resources Service. The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning wrote to the Chair of Governors of the 3 schools in November 2013 and requested that an investigation be undertaken to understand the reasons for this non-compliance with procedures and recommended that disciplinary action be taken if appropriate. In response, the 3 schools responded to recognise that there had been an isolated mistake and that it was not intentional, the governors gave their commitment that it would not occur again. Furthermore, all 5 employees subsequently received a cleared DBS check.
- 3.7 In November 2013, a further reminder was issued to all schools and the examples of non-compliance were also raised by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning at Headteacher meetings. Since the November 2013 reminder there are no further instances of a breakdown in this key safeguarding control.
- 3.8 The Education, HR and Internal Audit departments will continue to monitor this position rigorously.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 At the Audit Committee on the 6th January 2014 Members requested that an Internal Audit review of all starters in a school environment be undertaken to provide assurance on the processes in place.
- 4.2 Whilst non-compliance with the requirements of Estyn and the Council's procedures has been identified in 5 instances I do not consider there to be a systematic failure in the application of DBS checks as part of the recruitment process for school based staff.
- 4.3 Overall, I conclude that the control environment in relation to DBS checks in schools is satisfactory.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972
as amended by
THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
AUDIT COMMITTEE
31st March 2014

Report of the Group Director for Corporate Services

Author: Marc Crumbie (Operational Audit Manager).

Item	File Ref:
3. DBS Checks	IA / MC
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