

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0870 001 2345
info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk

31 October 2006

OFSTED REPORT: "SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: AN EVALUATION OF PROCEDURES FOR CHECKING STAFF APPOINTED BY SCHOOLS"

PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING THE RE-CHECKS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE RECORD

We wrote to you on 7 July with information on creating a single central record in each school of the checks that had been undertaken when individuals were appointed to work in the school. We asked you to pull together a record from the information you, your Local Authority, or HR provider had available, and to assess the number of additional CRB or List 99 re-checks which would be needed on staff in order to complete the record. We wrote again on 19 September with the details on how those figures would be collected, and said we would write again in October with information on how the final phase of this process would be managed: the arrangements for conducting those checks in order to complete the record.

We are very grateful to all those schools which have taken the steps outlined in our 7 July letter. By now, schools should have a record in place covering all available information on checks needed, with the only gaps being where evidence of the CRB or List 99 check could not be found. We are now in a position to provide the details of how to fill in the gaps in the record.

We are setting out in this letter:

- A step by step process for schools – Annex 1
- An aide memoire on applications for CRB checks. Many applications for CRB checks are returned because of easy-to-avoid errors. The enclosed aide memoire includes tips to help schools and local authorities avoid applications being returned because of simple errors – Annex 2
- Some further Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on submitting the additional CRB and List 99 checks – Annex 3.

You may find it helpful to refer to some of the material in the 7 July letter, in particular appendices 1 and 2, which set out for whom the school should have a record and what information should be held in relation to each individual, and the flow chart of the steps towards a single, central record of checks (this was appendix 4). The whole letter and its appendices is available for reference at this web address www.teachernet.gov.uk/vettingrecords

CRB re-checks

We are asking schools to submit their applications for these re-checks **via their Registered Bodies** during November to ensure that they reach the CRB by 30 November 2006. It is essential that all of these applications are sent to a special dedicated PO Box address which has been set up to facilitate this exercise. This is: CRB, PO Box 108, Darwen, BB3 1QW

List 99 checks

Where possible, eligible employers (local authorities and independent schools) should conduct List 99 checks through the Teachers' Pensions Online Service (TP Online). This service, which is subject to an annual charge, can be accessed at <http://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/>. We strongly encourage employers to use this route where possible and for maintained schools and their authorities to liaise on how this will be taken forward, as it is much faster. Where this is not possible, schools can alternatively submit requests by email to an email address which again has been specially created to handle the cases: List99.Checks@dfes.gsi.gov.uk However, it will take longer to process requests that way and we encourage as many requests as possible through TP Online.

Where staff have been appointed after 2002 and a CRB check is required, the List 99 information will be provided by the CRB Disclosure and no additional List 99 check is needed. Where List 99 checks are needed we would like to ask schools and local authorities to submit these requests as soon as possible, and in all cases before 30 November 2006.

Getting the results

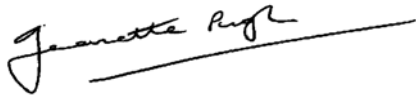
We anticipate that the List 99 checks should be completed by the end of the year, and possibly rather earlier if the on-line checking service is used. The CRB checks will naturally take longer as the CRB normally aims to complete these in 4 weeks; however, due to the number of additional checks that this exercise has generated, the CRB has put in place alternative arrangements to process these checks. DfES has been working closely with the CRB and other stakeholders to ensure that the process of completing records is managed smoothly. CRB is putting in place arrangements to process re-checks separately from checks on new staff joining the school workforce so that all checks are dealt with as speedily as possible. This will mean that checks received at the CRB by 30 November will be gradually fed into the CRB system over a period of time. We anticipate that, providing applications are made by 30 November 2006, all of these CRB checks will be completed by the CRB by the end of March 2007, with many being completed much earlier than this.

This means that by 1 April, schools and LAs should have in place a complete and up to date single central record of the recruitment checks that have been made.

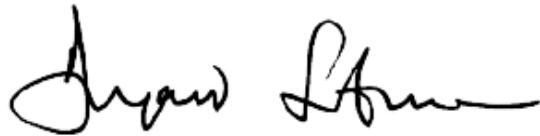
For reference, our 7 July and 19 September letters, along with an updated version of the FAQs and this letter, are available online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/vettingrecords.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact our Public Enquiry Unit on 0870 00022288.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jeanette Pugh in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Jeanette Pugh
Director, Safeguarding Group

Handwritten signature of Dugald Sandeman in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Dugald Sandeman
Director, School Resource and
Workforce Quality Group

Step by step process for schools to complete the record during November 2006

- Finalise assessment of the number of additional List 99 and CRB checks on existing staff that are needed to complete the single central record. Schools might like to refer again to appendices 2 and 3, of the 7 July letter about what checks should be carried out on which individuals, and also to appendix 4 of the 7 July letter which is available for reference at this web address www.teachernet.gov.uk/vettingrecords .

CRB checks

- Complete the applications, referring to annex 2 which sets out commonly-occurring errors on CRB applications and annex 3, some further FAQs on the process.
- Submit applications for re-checks via the Registered Body by the end of November 2006. Applications should be sent to PO BOX 108, Darwen, BB3 1QW.

List 99 checks

- Make your applications via the employer's on-line checking service, if at all possible.
- Failing that, by email application to the following address List99.Checks@dfes.gsi.gov.uk with details of a contact within your organisation who will be responsible for handling any potential matches against List 99.

Follow up

- By 1 April 2007, you should have a complete record in place.
- Keep this single central record up to date by adding information about new checks on new staff as those checks are made.

Avoiding delays with CRB applications

Employers and Registered Bodies play an important role in the process, in particular they must:

- Establish the true identity of the applicant, through the examination of a range of documents as set out by the CRB;
- Check and validate the information provided by the applicant on the application form; and
- Ensure the application form is fully completed and the information it contains is accurate. (See full guidance at www.crb.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=582)

Failure to do this could mean that the application form is returned by the CRB, unprocessed, which will lead to delay.

To help you do this we have created a checklist to help reduce the number of incomplete application forms being rejected and returned.

Top Five Common Errors in Applications for CRB Disclosures

No. 1 Five-year address history incomplete. Gaps and overlapping in address histories are by far the biggest cause of rejected forms.

No. 2 Middle name missing. When an applicant submits information such as a driving licence number and it indicates that a middle name exists, but it has not been detailed on the application form, the CRB will reject the form and return it to the RB for clarification.

No. 3 Surname at birth missing. An applicant crosses MS or MRS, but does not enter surname at birth in Section C20. The surname at birth must always be provided even if this is the same as the surname recorded in Section A.

No. 4 Level of check. The application form should always indicate the level of check required at Section Y6/7.

No. 5 Missing signature. The application form should always be signed by the registered Countersignatory at Section Y9, and by the applicant at Section H68

If you make any of these errors, your application form will be returned resulting in a delay in the Disclosure process

Do's

DO make sure you use BLACK INK THROUGHOUT and write clearly in BLOCK CAPITALS ONLY.

DO place only one letter or number in each box.

DO cross out any errors on the form and amend the correction to the right of the error. If there is no space to write next to a particular piece of information, please write as close to the text as possible. **(Except for sections Y6, Y7 & Y8 of telephone application forms. If you need to change the pre-populated information in these boxes, you should contact the Information line, as the form will need to be amended and re-printed.)**

DO ensure that both the form reference number and the applicant's name are noted on continuation sheets.

DO use the checklist above when checking the application form to ensure all mandatory fields are complete.

DO ensure you have placed a cross in the box in Section Y3/4, which states whether the position involves working with children and/or regular contact with vulnerable adults.

DO ensure line Y8 is completed correctly. Please note; if you do not have POA status, and payment was not made when initiating the application over the telephone, the appropriate payment must be submitted with the application form.

DO ensure when countersigning application forms, you use the same signature as on your original Countersignatory/Registration application form.

DO ensure signatures keep within the space provided in the box.

Don'ts

DON'T use staples to attach any cheques, continuation sheets or additional information.

DON'T place any stickers or stamps on the form i.e. featuring addresses or dates.

DON'T use correction fluid on the form. To correct a mistake, please follow the guidance above.

DON'T allow text to cross the edges of the boxes on the application form.

DON'T put a line through a section of the form or state a field is 'not applicable', if it is not relevant to the application then please leave it blank.

DON'T delete the 'On account' cross on application forms if the position is voluntary. Simply add a cross at section Y8 to indicate the post is for a volunteer. A charge will not be made for the check.

DON'T send in any original or copies of identity documents with the Disclosure application form.

DON'T insert spaces in the post code or the telephone number e.g. write a postcode as SW1H9NA instead of SW1H 9NA and write telephone numbers as 02071234567 instead of 020 7123 4567.

FAQS ON COMPLETING THE CHECKS

CRB checks

Where should schools and colleges send these applications for repeat Disclosures?

- In order to manage the volume of CRB re-checks, the CRB has put in place separate arrangements to receive and process these applications. Applications for these re-checks should be sent **via the Registered Bodies** to Criminal Records Bureau, PO Box 108, Darwen, BB3 1QW
- All your other CRB checks must be submitted in the usual way to PO Box 110 and will be processed by the CRB upon receipt.

When should these re-checks be sent to the CRB?

- Application forms must be received by the CRB by 30 November 2006. However, we strongly encourage schools and colleges to submit their applications as early as possible.

When will the CRB complete all these re-checks?

- The CRB will phase this work over a few months, fitting it round the peaks and troughs of their normal work. We expect the process to be complete, to allow schools and colleges to have a proper set of records in place, by the end of March 2007.
- The number of forms processed by the CRB each week will depend upon how much available capacity there is in the system after normal business has been processed. The CRB will run at full capacity in order to process these applications as quickly as possible. This will mean that for most applications you will be charged the application fee approximately 4 weeks prior to the Disclosure being issued
- Please note that forms received after 30 November 2006 will still be accepted but may not be processed by March 2007.

List 99 Checks

Where staff have been appointed after 2002 and a CRB check is required, the List 99 information will be provided by the CRB Disclosure and no additional List 99 check is needed. Where List 99 checks are needed, we would like to ask schools and local authorities to submit these requests as soon as possible, and in all cases before the end of November.

How should you undertake List 99 Checks?

Employers are encouraged to undertake checks against List 99 through the Teachers' Pensions Online Service. Eligible organisations are Local Authorities independent schools , Further Education Institutions, many of whom already subscribe to this service for pension administration purposes. There is an annual charge for this service determined by your type of educational establishment to meet the cost of the provision and maintenance of the digital signature that is needed to ensure that access to sensitive and personal data is provided in a secure environment. Individual maintained schools will need to liaise with their local authorities over arrangements for completing these checks.

How do I register to use the Teachers Pensions Online Service?

To use the Teachers Pensions Online Service eligible employers will need to complete an application form for your establishment. Application forms can be accessed at <http://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/>. You should click on the link on the left hand side of the home page entitled TP Online Application Forms. The forms include instructions on where to send applications. Separately, please provide written details of:

- a) a contact within your company who will be responsible for handling any potential matches against the list. A name, contact number and an address is required; and
- b) your CRB registration number or details of the umbrella body that you use.

How do I gain access to List 99 checks if I am not able to use the Teachers Pension Online Service?

If you are not able to use the Teachers Pension Online Service you can instigate List 99 checks via this Department. If your organisation has not previously requested List 99 checks through the Department you will need to register for access to this service by emailing List99.Checks@dfes.qsi.gov.uk with details of a contact within your organisation who will be responsible for handling any potential matches against List 99. A name, contact number and an address will be required. Please also provide details of your CRB registration number or details of the umbrella body that you use.

How do I undertake List 99 checks via the Department?

The Department has set up an email address to which you should submit your requests for checks of existing staff against List 99 List99.Checks@dfes.gsi.gov.uk . Please note that a separate email account already exists to enable checks to be made on new starters.

What information will you require to be able to process checks?

We require all of the following information in order to be able to process your checks:

Full forenames

Present Surname

Previous Surnames (please state if this is not applicable)

Date of Birth

Teacher Reference number (although this may not be applicable)

Start Date

How soon will I get a reply?

We strongly encourage schools to submit their applications as early as possible and by no later than 30 November 2006. We anticipate that the List 99 checks should be completed by the end of the year, and possibly rather earlier if the on-line checking service is used.