

ITEM 8

PERSONNEL POLICY ON CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Introduction

At the present time we do not undertake criminal record checks for any of our employees. The new Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) enables employers to undertake checks on workers who have access to children, older people and other vulnerable groups.

We are now required by the Police Act 1997 and other legislation relating to the protection of children and Vulnerable Adults to undertake such checks for new employees and to manage a system of checking all relevant employees every three years.

Organisational Implications

It is well known that the CRB is having difficulties processing checks at the present time. Their performance indicator is to undertake checks within 3 weeks. The City Council is reporting that they are experiencing very long delays. Recruitment is delayed and is affecting service delivery.

Introducing the system to Derby Homes with these delays could be devastating at present as we are recruiting high numbers of new staff that we need in place urgently. Our current procedures can lead to recruitment taking up to 2 months anyway.

However Derby Homes is vulnerable as it does not undertake any checks and we do have workers who have access to children and vulnerable adults. The worst case scenario is that an incident occurs and we have not taken any action to implement a more indepth checking process of our workers.

Solutions

- 1) We implement the procedures as they stand ie no employee starts work until the checks are complete.
- 2) We introduce the system on a phased basis that allows someone to begin work subject to a check being completed. This would be my recommendation. I have discussed this with Corporate Personnel and they would support this approach.
- 3) Do not introduce checks until the CRB are more efficient. This is not recommended as we are unclear how long it will take before the CRB begins to meet its targets and leaves the Organisation at risk.

Proposal

- To Register with the CRB as an independent employer. This can take between 6 – 12 weeks.
- Introduce the Criminal Record Checks on a phased basis in accordance with the attached proposal.

Occupational Groups subject to Criminal Record Checks

We need to decide which occupational groups should be checked. I have sought confirmation from the Chartered Institute of Housing's Best Practice Unit and they have advised that they expect Housing Departments to be undertaking checks.

From my knowledge of the legislation we should consider checking the following occupations.

- Senior Management Team
- Area, Estate, Local and District Managers
- Tenant Services Officer
- Customer Services Officer
- Area clerks
- Cashiers
- Housing Visitors
- Surveyors and Technicians
- Wardens
- Community Watch Officers
- Caretakers and Cleaners
- Customer Panel assistants
- Tenant Participation Officers
- Personnel and Staffing Officer

Financial Implications

- £300 to register with CRB and £12 per check. We will be given an account by the CRB and invoiced every quarter.

CB
20 November 2002