



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Paper for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on the 2 December 2019

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Key Points

- 1) *Pre-employment checks are in place for all Cafcass members of staff regardless of their role.*
- 2) *Cafcass reserves the right to withdraw a conditional offer of employment if specified pre-employment conditions are not met.*
- 3) *Pre-employment checks include; eligibility to work, an enhanced DBS check, Social Work registration where essential, references and health checks.*

1. AIM AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This paper provides a briefing on the current pre-employment check processes and provides assurance on the levels of compliance activity in place for new starters to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

2. KEY ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

2.1 Background

Pre-employment checks are a necessary requirement before any new starter commences work for the organisation. Cafcass is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. By ensuring that our recruitment and selection processes help to identify, reject or deter people who might cause abuse or are otherwise unsuited to work with children, we are able to strengthen safeguards for children and young people. Cafcass, therefore reserves the right to withdraw a conditional offer of employment if specified pre-employment conditions are not met.

There are a range of checks in place for all employees and additional professional checks in place for key roles such as the Family Court Adviser.

2.2 Eligibility to work and DBS

It is an essential requirement that checks are undertaken in respect of an applicant's identity and eligibility to undertake work in the UK, and this will usually be completed at the time of the interview attendance. Original documents are seen and verified and these are used to support the on-line application for an enhanced DBS certificate.

2.3 Social work registration (Currently HCPC soon to be Social Work England)

Registration with the appropriate professional body became a legal requirement for all qualified social workers from 1 April 2005. All social work qualified staff joining Cafcass are checked against the HCPC register as a pre-requirement before the final contract is issued with an agreed start date.

2.4 References

Applicants will need to provide at least two referees who will provide references that cover a minimum three year employment period. One reference must be from the current or most recent line manager. Any unexplained gaps are investigated prior to a final offer of employment being made.

2.5 Health checks

All successful candidates are required to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire as part of the conditional offer and may be required to undertake further health assessments prior to the final contract being issued. Recommendations that are identified are shared with appropriate stakeholders to manage adjustments and any risks.

2.6 Other pre-employment checks

Other checks that are undertaken include; establishing if there is a conflict of interest between other work the candidate may undertake, or other aspects of their life.

2.7 Additional processes to support the pre-employment check activity

The offer letter and initial draft contract clearly state that the final offer of employment is subject to clearance of the pre-employment process. Offers of employment have been withdrawn where these checks have not been fully satisfied either through the information that has been received or because the new starter has not actively engaged with the process to allow us to complete the process.

On occasions where there is a gap in this process, e.g. a reference may be outstanding, a judgement is made between the hiring manager and HR whether to undertake a risk assessment. This document outlines what pre-employment checks have been undertaken and what the gap is. This is subsequently approved by the Head of Human Resources and the National Service Director. Risk assessments are not put in place in relation to all elements such as HCPC and the health check. Where these are not available a risk assessment will not be considered.

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November 2019**