**Memorandum of Co-Operation – London Boroughs**

**Engagement of Agency Children’s Social Workers**

A key aim of the Memorandum of Co-Operation (MoC) across the London Boroughs is to ensure that agencies providing social work staff within Children’s Services are required to comply with an agreed standard for the completion of pre-employment checks to improve the quality of the workforce. In addition, a further measure under the MoC is to ensure that feedback is provided by the Boroughs at the end of each engagement for agency staff which is objective, complete and accurate. This guidance document sets out good practice measures for the pre-employment checks relating to agency workers and includes a template reference/end of assignment report.

The minimum standards will be applied to the engagement of an agency social worker before an assignment begins. Note these are in addition to standard checks that must be undertaken on all agency workers to establish their right to work in the UK and their medical fitness to undertake the assignment.

**1.** The person has a current registration as a social worker with the health and care professions council, (HCPC), <http://www.hpc-uk.org/check>.

**2**. Certificates of relevant qualifications are verified.

**3.** The person has a current CV, with any gaps in employment adequately explained. This should cover the previous 10 years or to age 16 if less.

**4.** The agency role will be exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and workers will be required to declare any convictions with dates.

**5.** There must be a current Disclosure & Barring Scheme certificate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service> . This should be based on an “enhanced check plus lists”, issued within the last 12 months via the current agency. The lists cover either the Adults or the Children’s Barred lists dependent on the role applied for. Noting:-

* Where the DBS check identifies information that is considered prohibitive, the details of the candidate's convictions will be passed to the hirer for an opinion. Whilst this opinion is awaited the worker will be considered not safeguarded and must not work.
* The agency must ensure that the temporary workers agrees to inform them, and the agency agree to inform the hirer, whenever anything changes in respect of the temporary worker's disclosure, including if they are interviewed for, charged, cautioned for or convicted of any offence.

**6**. If applicable; there is a certified, translated overseas police check. An 'overseas worker' for this purpose is defined as someone who has worked or lived in any country other than the UK for a period of 12 months or more over the last 10 years, or since the age of sixteen if less. A police check for each country is required where the worker has worked or resided. Should a police check not be available from a country, the Recruiting Manager will need to complete a risk assessment confirming the decision on whether to hire based on all available information.

**7**. A “face to face” interview has taken place prior to all agency social work assignments, albeit this may be through the use of video interviewing or similar technology where arrangements are in place.

**8**. At least two years’ references and/or end of assignment reports are obtained with gaps verified (note a longer timescale, up to 10 years is beneficial). A standard template for references/end of assignment report has been agreed by London Boroughs who have signed the Memorandum of Co-Operation for use with agency social workers moving between assignments, see Appendix 1. . Key requirements for completion are as follows:

* The template **must** be completed in full. It is **NOT** acceptable for a referee to state that organisational policy does not allow them to provide all information required on the template. If the form is not fully completed, then the reference shall be deemed to be unacceptable.
* As a guide, if the agency Social Worker has worked less than 3 months with an organisation, providing a full response will be limited. The person completing the reference can confirm dates, job role and key responsibilities and is unlikely to be able to provide any meaningful narrative about their performance. This guidance may differ if the agency Social Worker has left following concerns raised about their performance or conduct, details of which should be included in any reference/end of Assignment report. As a minimum, the reasons for leaving must be provided in the reference.
* Agencies should note that personal references and "to whom it may concern" type references aren't acceptable. Generally the quality of references will be enhanced by asking precise questions.
* Always check that the sender is appropriate and from a verifiable organisation; details can normally be verified via organisations’ website or with a phone call. E-mail references are standard, but for agency social worker roles there should be **No** occasion where the sender uses a private e-mail domain.
* As agency workers generally register with several agencies at the same time, in all likelihood there will be multiple requests for references/ end of assignment reports. Using the standard template should reduce duplication for those being requested to complete the reference as it should only need to be completed once, rather than several different forms having to be completed about the same agency worker. The organisation/manager completing the reference should retain a local copy of the reference/end of assignment report.

**9.** Clear, official photographic ID is supplied such as a passport, photo driving licence, national ID card or UK photo visa / Right to Work. This should be scanned, clearly visible and the candidate recognisable from the photograph. Any documents that are unclear will not be acceptable. The hiring manager must cross reference the system provided photograph with the person attending for assignment to ensure that they are the same.

End