

Time to end inconsistencies in CRB checks

The Association for Public Service Excellence today warned that the risk of sex offenders working in schools was not limited to teaching staff. Speaking on behalf of APSE Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, said **"There are a range of staff working in schools that could pose a risk to children. Many local authorities providing cleaning, caretaking, catering and leisure services to schools already carry out rigorous checks on staff. Our concerns are that such stringent checks may not be applied to private sector contractors"**.

Highlighting the difficulties that have arisen from current lack of guidance from the Home Office and DFES on staff that are not subject to compulsory checks Mr O'Brien warned that inconsistencies would continue pending the new Vetting and Barring scheme to be adopted following the recommendations of Sir Michael Bichard. **"There are bound to be other staff that will have slipped through the net. Younger school children in particular see catering staff, cleaners and caretakers as trustworthy by their very association with the school environment. Under the current system the lack of compulsory checks leaves it very much open to the best practice adopted by individual contractors. That is far from satisfactory"** warned Mr O'Brien.

#Ends#

Notes to Editors

1. The Association for Public Service Excellence has advised its local authorities to regularly recheck staff. The matter will also be debated by catering, cleaning, caretaking and leisure services providers at an APSE conference scheduled for Oxford on the 26th and 27th January 2006.
2. The new Vetting and Barring Scheme would provide employers with better guidance effectively compelling checks for ancillary staff in schools to be regularly check and for employers to re-check staff such as caretakers or sports coaches on line
3. The Association for Public service Excellence represents near to 300 local authorities throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
4. Paul O'Brien is available for interview. Please contact Mark Roden 0161 772 1810 for comments or an APSE briefing on this issue.