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State entities not fully complying with working with children requirements

The Auditor General today tabled the [Working with Children Checks – Managing Compliance](#) report in Parliament that assessed whether the WA Health system and the Departments of Education and Justice complied with their Working with Children Check requirements.

In WA, to create a safe and protective environment for children, most people who undertake paid or unpaid work with children must apply for a Working with Children Check. The checks are an important part of an organisation's controls to protect children.

Auditor General Ms Caroline Spencer said none of the 3 entities fully complied with their obligations and they could not be sure that everyone who needed a working with children card had one.

'All 3 entities understood the need for cards, but control weaknesses have created a risk that unsuitable individuals could work with children.

'For example all entities had procedures for managing Working with Children Checks, but they were not always followed.

'The entities did not consistently manage Card records across operational areas and information was often decentralised. As a result, management did not have a complete understanding of whether everyone required to, had a card.

'With new employees, the entities did not always check with Department of Communities that their cards were valid or inform the Department of hiring them. This means that the entities may be unaware that a prospective employee's card has been revoked, creating a risk that unsuitable employees could be working with children,' Ms Spencer said.

The audit contains a number of recommendations to ensure entities manage their working with children obligations. All public sector entities who work with children, not just those audited, should consider the report findings and recommendations.

Report resources

- [PDF version](#)
- [online version](#)
- [summary video](#)