

WORKING TO KEEP YOUR LOVED ONES SAFE

How the new Vetting and Barring Scheme helps protect children and vulnerable adults

MAKING sure our children and loved ones are kept safe is vital in the modern world. That's why the government is introducing a new scheme to help stop people who are unsuitable from working with children and vulnerable adults.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme or VBS will allow checks to be made on those who work regularly with these groups, offering better protection so that vulnerable people don't come to harm. A similar scheme is being developed in Scotland.

As part of the scheme, a new body called the Independent Safeguarding Authority will register people who work or volunteer regularly with vulnerable groups and maintain lists of those barred from doing so.

So just what does it do and how will it affect you or your loved ones? Here's our guide...

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Vetting and Barring Scheme will help protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse when in the care of others. But private and family arrangements and informal arrangements between friends and neighbours are not part of the scheme. People only need to register if they work or volunteer with vulnerable groups 'frequently' – once a week or more - or 'intensively' – four times or more in a single month with the same group of children.

WHAT'S THE TIMESCALE?

From the 26th of July, new employees and volunteers and those moving jobs or volunteering positions, who want to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults can register with the Vetting and Barring Scheme. And from November all new employees and volunteers must register before they start work by law. Relevant employers must check that new employees have registered for the scheme.



Pictures: ALAMY/posed by models

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Those registered will be checked for any change in their status offering continued reassurance for parents and for vulnerable adults and their families. Pre-employment vetting will help ensure that those known to present a risk of harm to children and/or vulnerable adults are removed from the workforce. And because the scheme covers more jobs, including volunteer work, than in the past it offers added protection.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Employers and other organisations involved in regulated activities with children or vulnerable adults will also have a duty to share information with the ISA. And it will be a criminal offence to work in a regulated activity role without being ISA-registered, work in a regulated activity while barred or allow someone to work in a regulated activity knowing they're barred.

WHO DOESN'T HAVE TO REGISTER?

Activities carried out in the course of family relationships or personal relationships aren't covered so you won't have to be registered to do informal babysitting or car sharing. The same applies if you're looking after an elderly relative or a friend's child, if you are watching the school play or football team, visiting a hospital or home caring for children or vulnerable adults, have organised a kick about in the park or occasionally volunteer to help out with an event, like a school trip.

CASE SCENARIOS

THE SCHOOL TRIP

A parent is asked to help supervise children on a school day trip, under the overall supervision of a teacher. They do not commit to helping out on future occasions. This is not regulated activity, because it does not meet the frequency test and the parent would not have to register.

THE VOLUNTEER

A volunteer with a local stroke club provides guidance to people in their own homes. The volunteer is providing guidance and instruction, and is thus

engaging in regulated activity. They must register with the Scheme and the manager of the volunteers must confirm the volunteer's registration status.

THE BABYSITTER

Richard is part of a babysitting circle and often looks after his friends' children. This is not covered by the VBS, as the babysitting is part of a personal relationship between friends.

THE SCHOOL ASSISTANT

Nadia volunteers at least once a week in a school, helping children with their reading. The school must check that she is registered.



Where can I get more information? Visit www.direct.gov.uk/vetting