



# WORKING TO KEEP YOUR LOVED ONES SAFE

The Vetting and Barring Scheme – working to protect children and vulnerable adults

**T**he murders of Soham schoolgirls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by school caretaker Ian Huntley shocked the nation – and focused public attention on the way that people who work with children and vulnerable adults are vetted.

The Richard Inquiry following the Soham murders recommended that all those who work with vulnerable groups should be registered, so that people who pose an obvious risk are less likely to slip through the net.

Legislation brought in since the Inquiry provided for a new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) which is now being rolled out to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. A parallel scheme is being developed in Scotland.

## WHAT ARE THE NEW SAFEGUARDS?

The scheme is designed to reduce abuse and protect the vulnerable by requiring anyone working or volunteering regularly with children or vulnerable adults to register with the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). This includes those who 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 or overnight.

ISA caseworkers will make the decisions on who should be barred, using information from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), who will process applications (AccessNI in Northern Ireland). Caseworkers can also obtain information from a wide variety of sources, including different police forces, social services and other agencies.

Under the scheme, children and vulnerable adults are protected in more settings than before. When a person becomes registered, their criminal records history will be kept continuously up to date, so that if any new relevant information becomes known about them, such as a conviction or caution, this will be notified to the ISA. This offers continued reassurance for parents and for vulnerable adults and their families.

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

New workers can register with the Scheme from 26 July and from November all new employees and volunteers must register before they start work.

## Rolling out the scheme

■ Since October 2009 employers, social services departments and some professional bodies have had a duty to refer to the ISA any information about individuals who may pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups.

■ **From July 2010, NEW employees and volunteers and those moving posts to work/volunteer with children or vulnerable adults can register with the ISA.**

■ From November 2010, all such NEW employees and volunteers must register before they start work. Those already in regulated or controlled activity will register in phases between April 2011 and July 2015.

## Who will need to register?

**The following WILL have to become ISA-registered: people who frequently or intensively have contact with children or vulnerable adults as part of certain specified jobs, or as unpaid volunteers. Many will already be CRB/AccessNI-checked. Roles include:**

- Teacher, classroom assistant or caretaker in a school.
- Swimming teacher providing weekly lessons to children.
- Volunteer with a local stroke

club that gives guidance to people in their own homes.

■ Parent who helps out regularly at school, once a week or more.

**The following WON'T have to register with the scheme: people who make an arrangement privately between family and friends. These include, for example:**

- Teenager from a local school who keeps an elderly person company for a few hours a week. Neither will need to register.

■ Parent who contacts her child's friends' parents to arrange a sleepover.

■ Parent supervising their child at a parent and toddler group once a week.

■ Family hosting an exchange student, where his or her parents have selected the host family.

■ Friend who cleans the flat of a pensioner each week, as a private agreement.

■ Parent who arranges with another parent that he will hold a football kickabout for their children once a week.

## PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS NOT AFFECTED

The aim has been to develop a proportionate, balanced approach. Private and family arrangements, such as car sharing and informal babysitting have never been part of the scheme. People will only be required to register if they work or volunteer regularly with vulnerable groups.

There is widespread backing for this new extra level of safeguarding. In a recent survey, 80 per cent of those aware of the Vetting and Barring Scheme said they supported it.



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**To find out more about the Vetting and Barring Scheme and which roles require registration, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/vetting](http://www.direct.gov.uk/vetting)**