

Committee: Children and Young People Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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ISA/REGISTRATION / VETTING & BARRING SCHEME

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Introduction

The Vetting and Barring scheme will constitute a new, improved checking and monitoring scheme that aims to prevent unsuitable people working or volunteering with children (and vulnerable adults). The ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority) will make decisions on who is to be “barred” from such activity. The ISA is a non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the Home Office and supported by the DCSF and the Department of Health.

ISA registration arises out of recommendation 19 of the Richard Report, the outcome of the Independent Inquiry into the murders of Jessica Chapman & Holly Wells, and will play a major part in reforming current vetting and barring practices. However, it is only part of the overall safer recruitment process and all other elements (such as references, checking employment history etc) continue. Equally, statutory CRB checks remain. Clearance to be ISA registered simply means that there is no known reason why an individual should not engage with children (or vulnerable adults) and does not constitute confirmation of approved employment in its own right.

Timescales

The scheme replaces the List 99, POVA and POCA barring lists with the ISA registration although there will still be two lists, one for children and one for adults.

From 12th October 2009 all ‘regulated’ posts will be required to have an Enhanced CRB check.

From July 2010 people will be able to register with the ISA and from November 2010 it will be a legal requirement for people newly appointed working in ‘regulated’ (more about this later) posts to be registered.

For all existing employees registration will be over a 5 year period starting with those who have never been CRB checked and then based upon the age of CRB checks. People in a controlled activity will be registered towards the end of this period.

Regulated & Controlled Activity

A regulated activity is described by the ISA as follows:

- Any activity which involves contact with children or vulnerable adults and is of a specified nature (e.g. teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment or transport) frequently, intensively and/or overnight;
- Any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults and is in a specified place (e.g. schools, children's homes, etc) frequently or intensively;
- Fostering & childcare;
- Certain defined 'office holders' (e.g. LA Director of Children's Services, trustees of children's charities, school governor).

A controlled activity is described by the ISA as follows:

- Ancillary support workers in NHS and FE settings (e.g. cleaner, caretaker, catering staff, receptionist) with frequent or intensive contact with children or vulnerable adults
- Those working for specified organisations (e.g. a Local Authority, NHS Trust) with frequent access to sensitive records about children and vulnerable adults (e.g. Swift).

No distinction is made between paid and voluntary work.

As all schools employees including volunteers are already required to have an Enhanced CRB check, the only impact will come in the terms of increased costs on school budgets for ISA registration. The cost for registration will be £64.

Currently, there is no requirement for all School Governors to obtain a CRB disclosure, but appointment procedures must confirm evidence of identity. An Enhanced Disclosure should be obtained for governors who have regular contact **or** unsupervised access to children **or** who work in the presence of children. As from 12th October it will be best practice to get **new** school governors CRB checked and from 26th July 2010 all **new** school governors will require ISA registration (mandatory from November 2010). Current governors will be picked up as they come up for re-election.

Next Stages

Initial communication has already taken place with schools through Schools HR, all ECC employees via the intranet home page, a guest appearance by Janet Stevenson on Jo's Blog, Union meetings and linking in with specific AH&CW and SCF project groups. In September we have booked Simon Morrison, Head of Communications, ISA (Home Office) for four presentations, three will be for Headteachers and one for internal staff and partner organisations.

An Essex Safer Employment Group has been set up to develop policy, procedure and guidance on safer employment and the introduction of the new scheme.