



URBAN SAINTS

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and Urban Saints *(Notice for Energize Plus Groups in England and Wales)*

ISA registration put on hold

The Government has announced that the registration of individuals with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) which was due to start on the 26th July 2010 will be postponed and a full review will now take place of the Vetting and Barring Scheme and the role of the ISA.

The registration stage of the Vetting and Barring Scheme was due to be launched in July, with it becoming obligatory for new volunteers and employees to register with the ISA by November 2010 if they are carrying out regulated activities with children and/or vulnerable adults. Whilst the registration process will not now go ahead as planned, we cannot ignore the ISA. This is because some changes under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 have already come into force.

Duty to refer still in place

The Government has made it clear that the 'duty to refer' which was introduced in October 2009 is not affected. This duty requires organisations such as ours to report to the ISA volunteers and employees who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to children and/or vulnerable adults. A failure to comply with this duty is a criminal offence.

Barred individuals

In addition, it will continue to be unlawful for an individual who has been barred to carry out a regulated activity - most roles within Urban Saints qualify as regulated activity. It is also an offence for an organisation to knowingly allow an individual who has been barred to carry out such an activity:

- Since January 2009, the ISA has been making independent barring decisions. It will continue to maintain two constantly updated lists, one for those barred from working with children, the other for those barred from working with vulnerable adults.
- Existing requirements concerning Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Access Northern Ireland checks will remain in place, and we will continue to carry out these checks on behalf of those who rely on us for them.

The scope of the remodelling process – to be co-ordinated by the Home Office in partnership with the Department of Health and the Department for Education – is currently being finalised; we will let you know as and when the Government announces a time frame.

New forms will still be used from the 26th July 2010

Although the registration phase of the ISA Vetting and Barring Scheme has now been put on hold, the CRB will still launch the new application form on the 26th July 2010 as originally planned. In order to process CRB Disclosure applications, the CRB will extract and ignore those parts of the new application form which capture ISA registration requirements, and use only those data fields which are required to process a CRB check.

Questions and answers

Why has ISA registration been put on hold?

The new coalition Government had already stated their intention to “review the vetting and barring regime and scale it back to common sense levels”.

The Government appreciates the amount of work and preparation that has gone into the scheme in sectors that work with children or vulnerable adults. Ministers are also aware that affected organisations will be keen to hear from the new Government details on the remodelling itself, and whether it will lead to any change to the future introduction of ISA registration. They will bear in mind that an early announcement on those specific points would be widely welcomed by all those who work with vulnerable groups.

The scope and timing of the remodel are expected to be finalised shortly and we will communicate any updates as soon as more information is available.

Will ISA registration still be introduced?

It is not yet clear how the Government’s remodelling of the Vetting and Barring Scheme will impact the future of ISA registration. Once more information about the outcome of the remodel is available, we will communicate this to you.

When can I start submitting CRB applications on the new form?

The CRB will accept applications on the new form from the 28th June 2010 although these applications will be held unprocessed until the 26th July 2010 at which point they will be processed in date received order. Because of this processing delay, we will only start to issue the new form from the 5th July 2010.

What is the last date I can submit CRB applications on the current form?

The last date that we can receive applications on the current form is the 20th July 2010 as the CRB will not accept them from us after the 26th July 2010. Any applications on the current form received by us after the 20th July 2010 will be rejected.

Now that the timetable for ISA has been changed, what does this mean for CRB renewal?

Before making any decisions about CRB renewal we will await more details from the Government about the future of ISA registration, which is expected shortly. It is possible that we will need to introduce our own timetable for CRB renewal but we will advise you about this once the picture becomes clearer.

Who do I contact if I have any other questions about ISA?

For answers to further questions, please contact Mark Arnold at the Support Centre, or via email at marnold@urbansaints.org

Mark Arnold

Volunteers Support Director & Child Protection Officer

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Note: Some information contained in this bulletin has been sourced from CCPAS and our solicitors, Anthony Collins.